

1844
K
ARTHUR FITZ-ALBINI,

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1799.



To *****, A. M.
OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP *****,
OFF THE NILE.

"WHENCE come these plaintive tones of discontent,

"These sorrowing murmurs cross the Ocean sent?

"Why, while on Victory's course I mount the prow,

"As my brave comrades the proud billows plough,

"For cheering notes of joy, why meets my ear

"Anger's hoarse voice? why flows Affliction's tear?"

'Tis thus, when first the long-expected sail

To Nile's immortal banks shall bear my tale,

Friend of my youth, who scorn'd vile flattery's phrase,

I seem to hear reproach, instead of praise!

But think since first from boyish trammels freed,

On Cam's resounding banks, on Granta's mead,

The jocund revels we were wont to lead,

How many a grief has spread its mournful hues
O'er all my thoughts, and darken'd all my
views!

Then seem'd, as on my lyre the free notes rang,
Fame's laurel chaplet in my reach to hang,
And bright behind Futurity's pierc'd shade
Hope's airy figures in the sunshine play'd :
Then hollow Friendship told the trusted lie,
And the tear mov'd in false Affection's eye ;
Then mad Philosophy conceal'd in smiles,
And veil'd with gaudy flowers, her future wiles,
Nor yet had once, with distant triumphs warm,
Let drop the mask that hid the demon's form.
But soon the fairy colours 'gan to fade,
Hence the gay vests which Folly's shape array'd,
Hence the loud shouts of senseless mirth; the roar
Of Bacchanalian orgies pleas'd no more :
The crowded city's din ; the idiot rites,
In which dull Fashion's votary delights,
Disgusted ; and to quiet vales I fled,
Where winds might whisper music o'er my head.
There, in the lap of languid ease, I lay
Many a long night and long inglorious day :
No titles brightened my ignoble name,
No riches lighted up my dying fame,
No more the circle list'ned as I spoke,
Attracted by some wealthier fool's dull joke :

But

DEDICATION.

But pity, the mean coward's insult, fell
To ring my vanish'd *honour's* parting knell.
Yet, long uneasy in their ashes kept,
The smould'ring fires of former efforts slept.
At length I burst Sloth's ignominious chain,
And wak'd the long-forgotten lyre again !
Then they, who once had triumph'd o'er my fall,
Stung with mad anger, nurs'd the rising gall,
And Envy, Malice, Calumny, combin'd
The deadly draught, to blast my peace of mind !
O ye, who still to faith and honour true,
Amid retirement's shades, (ye glorious few!)
Cherish my voice, my name, with growing love,
And in the lowering tempest kindest prove,
For you the Muse a lasting wreath shall weave,
Of which no time your temples shall bereave!
But ye, ye faithless, who in sorrow's hour
Shrank from the cloud, and fled the chilling
 shower ; [stream,
Who thought, while yet I sail'd on Folly's
Urg'd the light race, shot the gay chariot's gleam,
Spread the rich banquet to a crowd of fools,
And liv'd as one of Fortune's sensual tools ;
Who thought that wisdom issued from my tongue,
And boasted kindred as my praise ye sung ;
Yet, since the Muse revives, and temperate days
Nurse my lone studies, far from splendour's
 blaze,

Who

Who hear no eloquence, no sense discern,
 But with cold cowardly aversion turn;
 Ye mean! ye stupid! lofty scorn will spare
 The fate ye merit, and your names forbear!—

Then think, my friend, in what impervious
 clouds

Black Care my melancholy prospects shrouds,
 O'er scenes, which genial suns in vain illume,
 Impends, and throws an universal gloom;
 "Sheds browner horrors o'er the frowning woods,
 "Deepens the murmurs of the winter floods *,"
 And, chilling all the Muse's boyish fire,
 Bids none but plaintive notes escape the lyre!

Think and forgive, nor let reproach again
 Pervade thy bosom at the mournful strain!
 So shall the friendship, which, with ray serene,
 Has warm'd our breasts in every varying scene
 Of life's tempestuous ways, from earliest youth
 To the last hour, retain its equal truth!

* Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, ver. 169, 170.

PREFACE

TO THE
SECOND EDITION.

TO appear a second time before the publick, who have given so favourable a reception to the former edition of this Novel, without some acknowledgements of gratitude for the praise bestowed upon it, would seem like a want of that sensibility, of which, the few who know the author, will never accuse him. His earliest ambition was literary fame ; but solitude, indolence, hopes, perhaps too sanguine, prematurely and violently chilled, and some very complicated illness, certainly little merited, had for a while torpified, if not enfeebled, his mind, given a sombre hue to his sentiments, and at length, if occasionally the reviving embers of his former

ardor impelled him to seize the pen, guided it with a bold and careless hand, and perhaps infused too bitter, or too melancholy, a tincture on the language and the reflections. This must be his apology for the little expectation or anxiety he has expressed in the prefatory chapter of the second volume, regarding public approbation. Yet, perhaps, he has no reason to regret the effect of this turn of mind upon his book ; it may be, that the " language of the heart *," which it has caused to pervade these volumes, may constitute their principal, nay, even their only, merit.

" Nature," says Dr. Warton, in his remarks upon Pope's Elegy on an unfortunate Lady, " is more powerful than fancy, and we can always feel more than we can imagine †."

* Pope says of Cowley,

" Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric, art,

" Yet still we love the language of the heart."

† Warton's Edit. of Pope, I. 336.

The ill-accordance of the manners and habits of thinking of a young man, who addict himself to intellectual pursuits, with the general amusements and course of life in a country neighbourhood, may perhaps have derived much of the force, with which they are here painted, from the personal experience of the author. That silence which arises from timidity, reserve, absence of mind, or real ignorance of the ordinary phrases of rural pleasures or occupations, is interpreted into pride—and this imputed pride is returned by the most cruel envy, hatred, ridicule, and calumny; indiscretions are sought for with diabolical malice, and repeated with inconceivable exaggeration; and he soon finds that to be popular, he must be without even the suspicion of any excellence that it has been his ambition to attain.

Life is beset with difficulties; and there is no situation, of which ill-will may not take the advantage to aggravate the evils, and embitter the feelings.

feelings. Such as the author has represented to have oppressed Fitz-Albini, he believes are not uncommon. To encourage, therefore, a dignity of sentiment, under sufferings which often cannot be avoided, and by a delineation of similar distresses to soothe the tear of sorrow and disappointment, and instead of a false delusive hope, which experience will continually overturn, to teach affliction to look beyond the grave for happiness, may claim the praise of affording at least an innocent, if not an useful, amusement.

In filling up this outline, the author was perfectly aware, that the paucity of incidents would be deemed by many a great deficiency. But, as he always valued sentiment and reflection above perplexity of plot, which, when once unravelled, ceases to interest, he has chosen to follow his own ideas of excellence.

To the accusation of personalities, and perhaps from quarters with which he is utterly unacquainted,

quainted, he will not condescend to make much answer *. When a portrait of folly or vice was demanded from his pen, it was not always easy to avoid a feature or two of some of those strange figures which reality had so deeply impressed on his mind. But how few passages of this kind, in these two volumes, which the stupid calumny of three or four ignorant and narrow individuals has called a string of personalities, can even the most suspicious person point out ?

* What punishment is due to the dark assassin of his reputation, who, in a private anonymous letter to the "*British Critics*," of which he could not know the particulars, and which, therefore, he could not answer, appears evidently to have attacked his character, and to have done an equal injury to the person, of whose residence it insidiously dared, for the purpose of adding poison to the dagger, to assume the initials!—And what a rebuff to this assassin was the honourable conduct of those to whom the attack was addressed, who truly said, they were utterly unacquainted, even with the very name of the author of the Novel !

All those affronts, and irritations, and discouragements, which the hatred of vulgar minds, to a man of genius, adds to the evils to which the common lot of humanity has exposed him, are represented in the character of Fitz-Albini to have taken their peculiar colour principally from the combination of an illustrious descent, with a decayed fortune, operating upon a lofty spirit, at a period like the present, when there has been an endeavour to overturn all the antient principles of society, to treat the pretensions of birth, not only with contempt, but abhorrence, and to give a daily increasing influence to new-got wealth, however acquired, and whencesoever sprung.

This, every discerning reader will see, is the uniform hue and tendency of the novel—than which nothing can be farther from the paltry object of ridiculing a few obscure individuals, who flatter themselves with a very ill-founded self-importance, while they have only served, here and there, to point a sentence or two, or fill
up

up a vulgar groupe. The great topics of morals and politics, which have of late years been agitating all Europe, the author trusts it is sufficiently apparent, have occupied his principal thoughts, and been nearest to his heart.

At a crisis like this, when the circulating libraries have inundated the kingdom with a flood of novels, by half-witted writers, who have soothed their self-sufficiency, for the low place they hold in society, by calumniating all that was high and venerable, by representing rank as a gross usurpation, and talents, and wisdom, and virtue, as confined to the humbler spheres of life, it seemed no useless task to attempt to stem this torrent of seduction, so very flattering to ordinary and ill-educated minds, and so very mischievous to all the bonds by which society is held together.

Convinced as the author is, that what to shallow understandings appear unphilosophic remnants of feudal prejudice, have the deepest foundation

foundation in wisdom, and tend to soften, instead of aggravating, that inequality of ranks, which, constituted as we are, must exist among human beings, he feels deeply interested in recalling and enforcing these old-fashioned opinions.

So long as mere wealth, without consideration by what means it was acquired, or regard to the birth, or education, of the possessor, shall be an introduction into all society, and all places of trust and respect, the ties of harmony and goodwill, by which a government is supported, must every day be growing looser; subordination must become insufferable to its natural defenders; morals must daily deturpate; and all those honourable and virtuous employments, and professions, which drew after them fame, and "the unsubstantial reverence of the mind," instead of riches, will be despised and deserted. The poet, the historian, the moralist, and the philosopher, will have all their efforts damped, and even suppressed. The Clergyman, the Soldier, and the Advocate,

Advocate, will teach their sons to prefer the mean employ of the counting-house to the scanty competence, the laborious days, and the dangers and wounds of their own occupations, when they see the contractor and the stock-jobber, though rude, illiterate, stupid, and base, courted by all the world, and carry away all distinction by the glare of their suddenly-obtained property.

If aristocracy be wise, let these things be heeded; for, this fall of the old barriers which surrounded it, strikes at its very root. Among the principal advantages of hereditary rank, is its tendency to soften the heart-burnings of inequality, by counteracting the operations of intrigue, violence, extortion, and dishonourable riches. The man who inherits an honour is generally more virtuous, if not more able, than its first acquirer. (So at least thought Lord Bacon.) To bestow that respect and that pre-eminence on wealth, which are refused to birth and intellectual merits, will establish an inequality which, as neither prejudice nor philosophy can defend,

defend, must involve in its downfall the system with which it is connected.

Yet let it not be supposed that the author is so foolish as to insinuate, that either talents or virtue are the exclusive possession of the well-born, or that any system of government can eradicate the frailties of human nature. He has endeavoured to represent folly or vice odious, whatever be its station in life, and particularly so in those to whom an illustrious ancestry, and virtuous connections, have set a better example. But where abilities, highly cultivated, and an elevated heart, happen to be united to a noble descent, yet to want superior opulence, he has attempted to exhibit the struggles which such a character must undergo against the tide of the present popular opinions, and the final loss of him to society, though, in former days, such qualifications would have led, not only to his personal prosperity, but to the advantage of the publick, by the direction and exercise of his admirable mental powers.

ARTHUR

(1)

ARTHUR FITZ-ALBINI.

CHAPTER I.

ARTHUR FITZ-ALBINI, whose memoirs I am now about to write, was born at Dallington, in the county of ***** , on the 3d of July, 1769. His health and his employments, during his earliest years, were watched with that solicitude with which fond parents are accustomed to attend an only child, the sole hope of an antient and honourable

Vol. I. B family.

family. His boyhood discovered nothing which, to the generality of observers, appeared extraordinary. He was shy and pensive—though his spirits were unequal, and bursts of occasional gaiety displayed themselves to his intimate friends. At school his proficiency was uncertain; and his exercises, though uncommon, not always good. It seemed often in them as if he was struggling at some half-formed ideas, which his mind had not strength enough to reduce into clearness; and his compositions were almost always inferior to those who, not thinking for themselves, expressed with facility and perspicuity the superficial ideas which were treasured up in their memories. He left school, therefore, with a character of doubtful abilities, of which

which some spoke highly, and others despised. At college his character was still less known than at school; and he left it with disgust.

The world was now before him. He had ambition, but not for trivial distinctions. The words *fashion* and *ton* were so little thought of by him, that they were even beneath his contempt. He was sure that his descent, and he believed that his fortune, qualified him for that more elevated sphere of action in which the talents he felt within him inspired him with the wish to move. But of neither of these qualifications was he vain. He looked back, indeed, with satisfaction and reverence upon those ancestors who had been eminent for their

B 2

virtues,

virtues, or their powers of mind, in exalted stations ; and he was attached with a warm and unshaken affection to the abode, not only of his own nativity, but of a long line of those whose illustrious blood flowed in his veins.

His first wish was for a seat in parliament ; which soon became in his power, at an expence very inconsiderable to the apparent fortune of his father. But in this wish he was disappointed. His father refused to advance the money, with a mixture of fretfulness, solicitude, and anger, which astonished him the more, because he had always been instigated by him to a life of enterprize and ambition.

This

This father lived himself so retired, and with such œconomy, as gave reason to hope an immense accumulation to the patrimonial fortune ; and the son, therefore, felt, with excessive acuteness, the harsh refusal of so small a sum. Nor did he receive with less pain his father's commands, than his prohibitions, when those commands affected his conduct in the very serious affairs of life, in which he thought he had a right to chuse for himself. Heiresses of large neighbouring estates, and citizens' daughters of immense fortunes, were pointed out to him in a manner at which he could not avoid feeling repugnance and indignation.

His active mind now languished for want of employment. A sort of gloom began to overspread his spirits. The solitude of the country increased his melancholy. He found no neighbours of congenial minds. Fox-hunters, and Bond-street coxcombs, were alike the objects of his aversion and contempt. And the contempt and the aversion were mutual.

His sole amusement was now to be immured in his father's capacious library, except when he was riding, or walking by himself in the most solitary parts of the wild and wooded park. In that library he studied principally the history and the arts of his country; and in the long hours of his leisure descended gradually

dually from general to particular history, till he began to feel his heart interested, and his imagination inflamed, even by the dull Baronages in which he found so many of his ancestors recorded. His anger indeed sometimes rose at the tedious details and indiscriminating praises of these stupid books; and he looked upon the authors of them with the same scorn as *Burke* has so eloquently described. Still he considered many of the materials dug out by these laborious people to be curious and valuable; and erected fabrics of his own with them, which enlightened his understanding and soothed his fancy.

The active lives of which he read, however, did not tend to suppress his

ambition, and foster his content. He could not help sometimes reflecting, that the fortune which his father seemed to be increasing to an useless abundance might part of it be better employed in contributing to his present enjoyment, while his hopes were warm, and his mind and his health in their full vigour. He saw blockheads mounting over his head; and men who, in talents, in birth, or wealth, were widely his inferiors, not only insulting him by the importance of honourable offices, but really, from the necessity of habitual exertion, and the opportunity of the best and fullest information, exceeding him in the cultivation and activity of their minds.

While

While such were his reflections and his remarks, he always exerted his fortitude and his philosophy ; but it sometimes failed him. In the pure air of the country, in the laughing landscape around him, he for hours together forgot his chagrin ; but, on return to his studies, some political pamphlet attracted his notice ; some rival's speech in parliament caught his eye ; and he grew restless again.—

As he contemplated the portrait of some warrior, or some statesman in the gallery ; as he reflected on the unfading trophies or speaking memorials they had left ; he asked, “ Why am I alone
“ of this numerous race to slumber away
“ my life in indolence and obscurity ?

B 5

“ Are

“ Are my talents so small? Are my
“ wishes so mean? Am I happy in a
“ mere sensual existence? Or, am I to
“ exert my mind in forming no theories
“ but those useless visions which are
“ lost again as soon as they rise? The
“ little abilities with which Nature has
“ endowed me will soon be gone for
“ ever, for want of exercise. The ti-
“ midity and embarrassment with which
“ I speak will soon become habitual;
“ and the powers, which were at least
“ formed for perpetual activity, may
“ soon turn inward, and feed upon them-
“ selves. My father seems unhappy:
“ he sometimes speaks as if his hopes in
“ me had been disappointed—But am I
“ to blame? What would he have me
“ do? Can I be the tool of a minister?
“ Can

“ Can I come a dependent into parlia-
“ ment? Would he, rich as he is, to
“ save a few thousands, have me dis-
“ grace an independent and unfullied
“ name? Sure, I am not deceived!
“ He must be rich! Yet it sometimes
“ seems to me, as if nothing but dis-
“ tress could cause this harshness in him;
“ for, I cannot believe him of an avari-
“ cious nature. I shudder at this
“ thought; and at the vague stories
“ which I once heard! Certainly, for
“ myself, I could bear poverty, if it did
“ not come upon me unprepared. For
“ myself, I can bear it. But I cannot
“ bear that the hereditary hospitality of
“ this place, so useful to a poor and nu-
“ merous neighbourhood, should end in
“ me!—Perhaps, then, I have no right

“to complain ! Yet it cannot be, that
 “my father should have dealt with me
 “with so little candour and openness—
 “I will not suffer such suspicions to
 “enter my thoughts.”

A new course of melancholy fixed
 upon his mind. He wept as he beheld
 the castellated mansion, and strolled
 through its numerous apartments. He
 saw his father with a mixture of dis-
 trust and pity. He assigned new reasons
 for the care-worn face of his mother.
 He felt the necessity of a change of
 scene; and hastened, as the winter ap-
 proached, to plunge himself into the
 bustle of the metropolis. The eccen-
 tricity and the reserve of his manners
 were not generally attractive; but there

was

was something in his sense, his energy, and his sensibility, which interested most of those people of understanding who had an opportunity of conversing more familiarly with him. Nor were his family and his estates forgotten amongst his attractions, though he himself seemed entirely unconscious of those recommendations.

London exhibited, to a strong mind and strong passions like his, a struggle of pleasures and mortifications—He was praised and calumniated; admired and ridiculed; courted and neglected. He saw fellows sweeping by him in the glitter of coronets, whose fathers had come home loaded with crimes, and the spoils of India, whither they had been sent by
the

the bounty of his family, in which they had been menial servants: he saw these people, in the opinions of the women, and the annals of fashion, of supreme consequence; while himself was supposed to be of such obscurity, that his very name was not recognized. He saw these fellows look askance upon him with the indifference with which they would behold an inferior being; while, if he spoke with the wisdom of angels, they would treat it with contempt, for coming from a being so obscure in their estimation as he was. He found in each of all the various modes, honourable and dishonourable, by which distinction is aimed at, a certain circle formed, within the pale of which, whoever was not admitted was denied the honours of the fraternity—
while

while admission within the pale was, for the most part, gained by the impudence and intrigues of pretenders, who had no sort of merit which ought to have been their title to it. Thus, for instance, *fashion* and *ton* might be supposed to require birth, rank, education, and fortune; whereas, the greater part of those, whom the world enrolls among this illustrious body, possess few—and many, none of these qualifications. A majority are of low birth, low fortune, vulgar manners; and having nothing but the abject perseverance with which they have attached themselves to people of rank. Again, in a more striking instance—Fitz-Albini had hoped that, at least, in the circles of literature, a juster estimate would be found. But he soon discovered,

vered, that the greater part of those who were the well-known members of these parties, were the flimsy appendants to genius, the little meteors of a day, whose affected productions could only live while themselves were fluttering about to display them and keep them alive. He saw poets, who were in vogue because their productions never soared above ordinary events, or ordinary feelings.—He saw eminent politicians, who disgusted him by a certain sort of jargon, and cant phrases, by which they concealed not only their ignorance, but their total want of mental powers.—He saw historians and antiquaries, who were incapable even of writing their own language with tolerable grammatical purity; but who had
acquired

acquired their fame by knowing the title-pages of scarce books, and collecting them, at whatever price, at all sales.— All this while, the true genius of every class, contented with his own powers, used no arts to force himself into notice, and was therefore totally unknown, and totally unheeded, by those more famed societies.

Yet in London he found much to gratify him. The busy streets afforded subjects of reflection to an active understanding. In society he occasionally met with a concentration of such knowledge, such sense, such genius, as a country life never affords. Even the most brilliant abilities are too apt to sink into indolence, sometimes even torpor, by a long life
spent

spent in the inactivity of the country.—
In such cases, “solitude and tranquillity,” as Werter says, “give an enjoyment of life. Life itself is happiness, and the pleasure of mere existence so entirely absorbs” a man of genius, “that he neglects his talents.”—
Here, on the contrary, the collision of the intellectual powers, rivalry, exertion, all contribute to sharpen them.—

The shops of booksellers, the repositories of artists, all attracted and gratified him.

His relations were numerous; and what the world calls highly respectable. They were in general rich, and well allied. In short, he could have boasted,
had

had he been inclined to boast of such things, that he was related to almost all that was splendid and antient amongst the nobility. But he knew but few of these; and courted none of them. He had, indeed, a first cousin, the son of his father's younger brother, who was well-known, and in high estimation amongst them all. And this cousin possessed enough family kindness to him, to have willingly introduced him amongst them all. But this, for a variety of reasons, Fitz-Albini either neglected, or declined.

This cousin had been born and educated in the metropolis; and, at the age of sixteen, had bought a commission in the Guards. His father had enjoyed a
place

place under government; and early in life had married an heiress from the city, with twenty thousand pounds:—of which the son came into possession, by the death of both his parents, at the age of twenty-one. He was a young man, of a good person, and an elegant appearance and manners; but extremely weak, and vain; the consequence of which was, that his whole thoughts were directed to trifles. He had no other idea of the purposes of life, but to dress in a *certain* way; to use *certain* phrases; to lounge away *certain* hours in Bond-street, or the Park, and to frequent *certain* assemblies, clubs, and public places, with a *certain* set.

Wherever it happened that these cousins met in the same company, there was
scarce

scarce an instance in which the advantage was not supposed to be in favour of this superficial young man. Nothing would have made the party in general stare so much as an attempt to prefer poor Arthur to his more *flashy* relation. The superiority was supposed to be so decided, that it never could admit of a question.

The following dispute, however, once passed on the subject: a young man, who lived in these fashionable circles, and in general smothered his natural sense, which fitted him for better purposes, occasionally fond of contradiction and singularity, very roughly replied to some one, who was laughing at Arthur.

Question.

Question. "Sir," said he, "on what
"ground does this person raise your
"contempt?"

Answer. "Because, fir, he is a coun-
"try-quiz, and a bore, and a stupid
"fellow, who has neither knowledge of
"the world, nor spirit to live in it."

Q. "How so, fir?"

A. "Why, does he talk with that
"happy volubility and ease which dis-
"tinguishes his cousin? Does he dress
"with that happy (however painful)
"neglect? Does he talk to Lady ——
"at the Opera? or saunter with the
"——— down Bond-street? Does he
"possess that enlightened manner, that
"pre-

“ pre-eminence over the vulgar, which
“ smiles with a vacant gaiety when they
“ weep, and preserves an unmoved so-
“ lemny of countenance when they
“ laugh? In short that happy art,
“ that *je ne sçai quoi*, that — — — —”

Q. “ That art, sir, I suppose you
“ mean, which degrades an intellectual
“ being to such a creature as requires
“ only the faculties of an idiot, and a
“ heart no more sensible than stone.”

A. “ But sure you must allow that all
“ knowledge, but the knowledge of life,
“ is romance and theory! Is not this
“ the knowledge that ‘ comes home to
“ men’s business, and bosoms?’ What
“ is the understanding, that cannot ex-
“ ert

“ert itself in society? or the learning,
“that does not teach us freedom, ease,
“and elegance, in the conduct of the
“world?”

Q. “And do you really suppose that
“these contemptible wretches, who dress,
“and fimper, and know a few change-
“able ceremonials, and talk a few cant
“phrases, and frequent a few prescribed
“places, are acquainted with life; with
“human nature; with the operation of
“the passions; with the real conduct of
“the world? Alas! poor things! the
“very clown, who walks the same limi-
“ted furrows of a few small acres from
“year to year, and who but once in the
“twelvemonth even sees the next mar-
“ket-town, whose very countenance
“looks

“ looks as fixed as wood, because the
“ exertion of thought has scarce ever
“ disturbed its muscles ; even this un-
“ informed being knows probably more .
“ of human nature than they do !”

Such was the accidental defence of the character of Arthur, against the general neglect with which he was received amongst the acquaintance of his cousin. He was naturally but too acutely awake to neglect and ridicule ; and this excessive sensibility too often gave an embarrassment and awkwardness to his manners. But the strength and fortitude of his mind began gradually to give him a greater firmness, which sometimes even put on an appearance something like defiance ; an appearance which added

to the number of those who hated him.

The powers of his mind began now to display themselves wherever he went, and to gain him a sort of involuntary consequence, which those who felt it were very unwilling to allow. They watched him, therefore, with a sly, yet unerring, malignity.

The world, and all its busy occupations, its allurements, its follies, and its crimes, were pressing at once upon his observation, and his enjoyment. To an active mind and warm passions, the first impression was confused. To assert that he never made a hasty, or ill-founded observation, that he never yielded

yielded to the dazzle of shew, or the seductions of vice, would be unworthy of belief. Scandal, however, could yet fix on nothing which detracted much from his wisdom, or his virtue; but that accursed fiend was already busy in a thousand oblique hints and ridiculous stories, which might accumulate, till some fatal step should at length cause them to explode with such exaggerated violence, as would overwhelm his character for ever.

He found that no effort could yet enable him to attain that easiness of manners in mixed society, which is deemed so necessary to the appearance of polish; and this difficulty gave him, in the company of women, a character

of selection and particularity, which, though it interested some, highly offended others. Absurd stories were therefore continually circulated of his attachments; of the imprudent match he was about to make with one, and the mercenary alliance he was going to form with another. Sometimes he was represented as an adventurer, who was in search of an opportunity to make his fortune; and sometimes as a romantic young man, unacquainted with life, who was about to throw away his large estates, and splendid connections, on a low and portionless beauty.

Disgust was always driving him to the society of his books, his own thoughts, and a few sensible friends, where he
seemed

seemed truly happy, as he indulged his insatiable thirst of reading, or poured forth without offence the impetuous energies of sentiment which characterized his soul. No other ambition but that of a seat in parliament remained in his heart: this early wish he could seldom eradicate; but all other wishes, and sometimes even this, now yielded to the desire of passing his days in the abode of his ancestors; in the solitude and romantic scenery of the country.

He began to pine almost for his "old hereditary trees;"—his imagination began to be busy with a thousand visions; he fancied his tenants happy around him; and neat cottages rising up in every nook and dingle of the

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park;

park ; he saw the falling towers repaired to their former splendour ; and rural hospitality again enliven the echoing hall of Dallington.

About this time a little circumstance arose, which shook the greatness of his mind, and confirmed his resolution of retirement. Some question of privilege was agitated in the House of Lords, in which, I know not how, he was so far implicated that his evidence was required. He delivered his opinion with a firmness which attracted the notice of a little, proud, officious peer, of a very minute, though laborious mind ; who, though he was of an extremely fordid origin, and though his family had literally purchased their peerage within a
very

very few years, was so offended with the boldness of his assertions (it happening that they were contrary to his own ideas), that, in the observations he made in his speech, he animadverted very severely upon the freedom with which obscure individuals of the lower orders in life presumed to speak before that honourable bar, and the necessity of preserving inviolate the reverence due to the birth and rank which gave a seat in that noble assembly.

Never before did the passions of Fitz-Albini rise so completely beyond his controul—" *Obscure individuals of the lower orders—birth—and rank!*" And these words from the mouth of such a

man as Lord ***** ! The sounds were perpetually ringing in his ears !—

Wounded pride at length subsided into a dignified contempt. But it was a contempt that put him so completely out of humour with the busy scenes in which he was engaged, that he soon put into execution his wishes of retiring to his father's house in the country.

The purity of his native air, the woods, the lawns, the fragrance, the quiet, the association of the surrounding objects with ideas of former pleasures, seized upon all his senses like enchantment, and filled his heart and his mind with sensations and ideas, that were so
full

full and so confused as to be literally un-utterable.

“ How (thought he) could I leave
“ these scenes for the artificial pleasures
“ of London ! for places, where all
“ the malignant passions of our natures
“ are too much excited in the best dispo-
“ sitions, or at least predominate in the
“ bad, at the expence of the common
“ happiness ! How have I thrown away
“ the gifts of Fortune ! How have I
“ abused the happy lot to which I was
“ born ! These hills, these vallies,
“ these high, and wood-crowned banks,
“ how might I have sighed for such en-
“ viable blessings, had I not been born
“ to them ! But possession has made
“ me careless of their value. I have

C 5

“ spurned

“ spurned them, and sought for amuse-
“ ment amidst profligacy and folly ;
“ amidst wretchedness and insipidity.
“ Let me recover my taste before it be
“ too late ! Let not my understanding
“ be misled by fashion ! But, grateful
“ for the bounty of Fortune, let me die
“ in the innocent solitude of my native
“ spot !”

CHAPTER II.

SUCH were Fitz-Albini's first reflections on returning to his birth-place. A few days passed rapidly in uninterrupted enjoyment. His father's spirits revived at his presence ; his mother beheld him with the most affectionate smiles. His quiet, however, was soon disturbed by the intrusive visits of some of his country neighbours, to whom his father insisted upon his paying every attention. He found himself less than ever adapted to this kind of society. He knew the contempt, the abhorrence, or

the envy, with which he was regarded—and he attributed to the true causes (a vulgar curiosity, or a restless attempt to find employment for some of their heavy hours), the visits he now received.

The difficulty of finding any common topics of conversation was almost insurmountable.—Books, of course, were a proscribed subject. But even the most ordinary principles and events of politics, the leading outlines of what was passing in the world, even now, when all the governments in Europe seemed convulsed to their very base, and destruction threatened to be stalking towards every man's door by an attempted subversion of those principles by which his person and property is secured; even these, at
such

such a time, appeared to pass by, unheeded, or worse than unheeded.

However, he could not avoid accepting an invitation to dinner at the house of one of these neighbours. This person was Mr. Bennington, of Trayling—a man of some family and a considerable hereditary fortune.—I will describe the party who were engaged to meet him.

Mr. B****, the son * of * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

* The author, in the former edition, mutilated this character, which, as it stood in the MS. was in his conception the best drawn in the book, lest there should be an individual foolish enough to take it to himself. He is informed that

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *

He hates the company of all, over whom he cannot preside ; and, with an affectation of humility, is more proud and envious than any body I know. But his pride, instead of being manly, and his envy, instead of being bold, display themselves in sneers, in peevishness, in oblique scandal, and dark insinuations.

that his forbearance has been ineffectual. A greater clamour, and more bitter resentment, could not have pursued him, if the most offensive page had never been cancelled. But, for the present, he scorns the ample retaliation he has in his hands ; and therefore suffers the asterisks still to stand.—Feb. 25, 1799.

Mrs.

Mrs. Burley, better known by the name of Mrs. O'Callaghan*, had been the widow of an Irish factor, and, being left with a good income, and many daughters, took an adjacent seat, where she exhibited her girls charms to all the young men whom she believed to have good fortunes. — By this means her house was generally filled with a set of riotous youths of all characters and descriptions. But, while she was thus active in providing for her daughters, she had not been forgetful of herself; nor were the attractions she displayed with-

* This character also, one of the most common which could have been delineated, the author has heard appropriated to three or four people;—with little propriety, at least as to one of them, who, had the author thought of her, would have been characterized chiefly by her envy, and levo of defamation.—Feb. 25, 1799.

out

out success; wherever she went there were constantly seen to buzz around her a set of contemporary beaux, towards whom she was not wanting in all the little arts of coquetry and flirtation which distinguish a younger beauty in the zenith of her power. Dr. Burley, a grave, pompous divine, who could not resist the charms of this "dainty widow," was not a little vain, to carry off, at the age of sixty, and hobbling with the gout, such a delectable prize from his numerous rivals.

Miss O'Callaghan inherited all the characteristic excellences of her mother. Her person and her manners were conducted with an easy forwardness, which was secure of drawing a circle of admirers

mirers round her.—Fitz-Albini, from the moment he entered the room, became the object at whom her charms were directed.—She began by admiring and playing tricks with his dog, for which she hoped the gratitude of the master would repay her in the admiration of herself. But, for once, she mistook her aim.—The “bold Irish girl” exhibited nothing that could excite any other passion than disgust in Fitz-Albini.—That disgust was soon discovered by the disappointed beauty, and re-paid by malignant scandal, and envious persecution.

The other persons present were totally deficient in every trait, by which they could have been particularized.—

It

It was an uneasy day to Fitz-Albini. He seldom spoke, till some accidental subject vehemently excited him to correct such ill-tempered misinformation, or such a misconception of principle as was not only stupid, but of evil tendency. He then perhaps said a few words with rather too much energy and emotion. A dead silence of the company followed the first word he spoke, as if to add to his distress; and when he had concluded, Dr. Burley nodded, with a kind of oracular importance; and Mr. B**** looked in the face of the person who sat next him, with an expression that implied something between a suppressed smile and a sneer.—But nobody relieved his embarrassment by continuing the conversation.

When

When at length the hour of departure arrived, he took his leave with impatience; and began to reflect, that, however disgusted he was with the society of London, the *society*, at least, of the country was worse. Assumed pre-eminence, vanity, and self-importance, are always disgusting: but when those odious passions are founded on the narrow comparisons of a country neighbourhood, or the narrow objects of ambition of so confined a circle, they are intolerable. Proud of their descent, perhaps, because they have lived a century in possession of the estate they now hold; or of their fortune, because no one within ten miles can equal them; or of their understandings, because they lay down the law at the turnpike-meetings,

or

or quarter-sessions, of the district ; they either betray an overbearing insolence, or discover, by their envy and malignity, that, “ like the Turk,” they can endure “ no equal,” much less a superior, “ near “ the throne.”—

It is melancholy to reflect, that a life, passed amidst the great scenery of Nature, should not expand the mind, and purify the passions.—Alas ! how seldom is that the case !

“ For who loves that, should first be wise and good.”

In an enlarged intercourse with society, self-interest, one of the strongest, alas ! of our motives, compels us to polish the roughnesses of our nature, to extend our notions, and to soften our passions

passions and our manners, till they have the appearance at least, and much of the good effect, of benevolence and philanthropy. But the independence and loneliness of a country life call for less frequent exertion, and therefore foster the propensities of a mean heart, and sordid understanding.

Fitz-Albini, therefore, resolved against a mode of spending his time, that, while it was thus passed, was worse than lost, once more laid down plans of storing his mind with all with which study or reflection could furnish him in his present retirement. He yet hoped the time might come, when these stores might be brought into action; and not
be

be suffered to evaporate in no other good than selfish improvement.

He began to add to his father's library, already rich, all that were wanting of the original historians of Europe, and such accounts of all the remaining parts of the world, as, being in the best known of the modern, or in the Greek, or Latin, languages, he was enabled to read. He perused with deep attention, and revolved in his active mind, the strange fluctuations between barbarism and civility, that had several times given new characters to the nations of the earth. He traced, with painful pleasure, the rapid decline, and the slow rise, of the sun of Science ; he investigated the
paths

paths of its resurgence ; and beheld with melancholy fear, the dark and impenetrable clouds that seem at present to be gathering before its pathway.

Amidst these general and extensive enquiries, he descended occasionally to those more minute details which are matters perhaps rather of curiosity than use. The origin and progress of the sovereign houses of Europe, so deeply connected with each other ; and even of the antient nobility ; more particularly those of France and England, derived for the most part from one common stock, and so extremely similar in their early customs, manners, and possessions, were subjects he did not disdain to investigate with the most profound labour.

These

These studies, however, only convinced him of the instability of human greatness; and the rapid mutations of honours, and of property: and he sighed over the fallen glories of the few that still survived! Nor could he avoid a peculiar regret at the recognition that the name of Fitz-Albini was among the most remarkable of the number! He looked over the map of its wide-spread ruins, its dilapidated castles, its manors, and its forests; he pursued its traces till he had encompassed half the kingdom; and wept when he reflected that its only remaining hold was in the tottering mansion of Dallington, and its narrow appendages. And how long, thought he, shall we retain this last and long-loved remnant of our better days?

Even

Even now an inexplicable cloud seemed to hover over it! The harpies of destruction seemed to grin with a dreadful kind of half-suppressed exultation at the certainty of their future prey!

Envy and Malignity, under the form of some of the neighbouring gentlemen, continually intruded their visits upon him, however coldly received, with a kind of impertinent curiosity which he could scarcely comprehend. And one day, while he was in the deepest of his meditations, there came Sir James Pickman, of Brimfield-Hall, and his daughter—and at the same time Mrs. Bracey, by way of apology for her husband; and Miss St. Leger, a relation of her husband, then visiting at her house.

Sir James Pickman was by birth a Scotchman, who had emigrated thence a boy, and ingratiated himself into the shop of a great dealer in military accoutrements, in which he gradually rose to be first partner; and, by army contracts, and the subsequent business of a banker and a stock-jobber, was supposed to have amassed a considerable fortune. In a numerous creation of baronets a few years since, he had arrived at that honour, together with a Scotch man-midwife, two East-Indians, the penniless dependant of a pompous nobleman; a country-gentleman of overbearing temper, whose father had amassed a good fortune in the occupation of a miller; a vain clergyman, who had lately married a rich widow, whose fourth

cousins

cousins had formerly enjoyed the honour; three placemen of the lowest origin, and no fortune; and a speculating hop-factor, of doubtful credit.

Sir James Pickman was not insensible to the vanity of descent; and, had his name not been quite so obscure an one, would probably have contrived to annex himself to some family, of whose splendour he could have boasted.—Nor was his daughter composed of very hard materials.—She had a good person, set off by all the advantages that expensive dresses, and all the arts of milleners and mantua-makers, could give it; and a countenance full of a particular expression, with large black eyes, dark and very coarse brown hair, and a complexion

almost of a Spanish darkness. She had early indulged a romantic disposition, and was particularly well read in the wonderful fictions of a circulating-library.

When Fitz-Albini entered the room, notwithstanding the ill humour in which he was probably displayed him to little advantage, the attractions of his person were sufficient to awaken the immediate interest of Miss Pickman. Nor was she pleased at the forwardness with which Mrs. Bracey instantly forced herself into conversation with him. There was no subject on which Mrs. Bracey did not successively enter without intermission. If painting was mentioned, she drew out of her pocket some wonderful performances of her

her own, done after three lessons only.— If riding, walking, dancing, travelling, visiting, acquaintance, health, illness, building, furnishing houses, laying out grounds, regulating her household; or whatever else could arise; she had still some wonderful story to relate, by which she silenced every other person.

Fitz-Albini was so overpowered by her volubility of language and obtrusive manners, that he seemed totally at a loss how to extricate himself from her. Miss Pickman had already left her chair, and employed herself in looking out of the window. Fitz-Albini taking advantage of this circumstance crossed the room to her, and made some trifling remark on the scenery, which, however,

had the appearance of an attention to her, at that moment particularly pleasing—she discovered it by her manner, and the lively interest with which she entered into a conversation with him, who was happy at any pretence for avoiding to listen any longer to Mrs. Bracey.

Not many minutes had passed in this way, when a sudden scream alarmed the nerves of Fitz-Albini, who, looking round, and observing it to come from the part where Mrs. Bracey sat, hastened towards her, when, as he was approaching her chair, she sunk as if in a fit off her seat, and fell almost lifeless into his arms. She soon, however, recovered; and shewed less distress at this awkward situation than Fitz-Albini; —whom

—whom yet she contrived to detain in fetching water for her, and various other attentions, for a considerable time.

This incident did not pass without a few malicious glances from Miss Pickman; to whom Mrs. Bracey's character was better known than it could be to Fitz-Albini.

Meanwhile, Sir James Pickman contrived to engage Fitz-Albini for a future day at Brimfield; and Mrs. Bracey insisted on his coming to visit Orleton-Hall, the place of her residence, where she had more extraordinary pictures, a more scarce library, and more romantic scenery to shew him, than it was likely he had ever yet met with.

What a joyful deliverance to Fitz-Albini was their departure ! He seized his hat, and rushed out of the house, and breathed his native air, and indulged his native thoughts again.—With an hurried and impetuous step, he wandered to the farthest and most retired parts of the park ; and there, where he heard the ploughman, as he laboured in the furrow of a piece of waste now breaking up for the first time, fill even the distant hills with the echo of his loud and chearful song, regret seized him, that he had not been born to this humble station. “Is not
“this,” said he, “the real gladness of
“the heart ? Are not his spirits ge-
“nuine ? Does not his employment
“innocently and usefully occupy his
“time and his thoughts ? Does he
“despond

“ despond beneath the insipidity, is
 “ he tormented by the wicked passions,
 “ of refined idleness ? Does not health
 “ brace his nerves ; and labour exclude
 “ uneasy thoughts ? ”

He repeated to himself some lines
 out of Cowley's *Country Life* :

“ Bless'd be the man (and bless'd he is) whom
 “ e'er
 “ (Plac'd far out of the roads of hope or fear)
 “ A little field and little garden feeds ;
 “ The field gives all that frugal Nature needs ;
 “ The wealthy garden lib'rally bestows
 “ All she can ask, when she luxurious grows.
 “ The specious inconveniences that wait
 “ Upon a life of business, and of state,
 “ He fees (nor does the sight disturb his rest) ;
 “ By fools desir'd, by wicked men possess'd,” &c.

D 5 Again,

Again, he recollected Claudian's *Old Man of Verona* thus ; beautifully translated by Cowley :

" Happy the man, who his whole time doth
" bound

" Within th' enclosure of his little ground :

" Happy the man, whom the same humble place

" ('Th' hereditary cottage of his race),

" From his first rising infancy has known,

" And by degrees sees gently bending down,

" With natural propension, to that earth,

" Which both preserv'd his life, and gave him
" birth.

" Him no false distant lights, by Fortune set,

" Could ever into foolish wand'rings get ;

" He never dangers either saw or fear'd ;

" The dreadful storms at sea he never heard :

" He never heard the shrill alarms of war ;

" Or the worse noises of the lawyer's bar :

" No change of consuls marks to him the year ;

" The change of seasons is his calendar :

" The

“ The cold and heat Winter and Summer shews;
“ Autumn by fruits, and Spring by flow'rs, he
“ knows :
“ He measures time by landmarks, and has found,
“ For the whole day, the dial of his ground :
“ A neighb'ring wood, born with himself, he sees,
“ And loves his old cotemporary trees :
“ He's only heard of near Verona's name,
“ And knows it, like the Indies, but by fame ;
“ Does with a like contentment notice take
“ Of the Red Sea, and of Benacus' lake :
“ Thus health and strength he to a third age
“ enjoys,
“ And sees a long posterity of boys.
“ About the spacious world let others roam,
“ The voyage life is longest made at home.” —

These and many other of Cowley's poems, written in a similar train of thought, came in full force upon his mind. They agreed with his own con-

viction. He blamed the aspiring schemes of life he had formerly indulged.—He wished he could again have said with his beloved poet,

“ If ever I more riches did desire

“ Than cleanliness and quiet do require ;

“ If e'er ambition did my fancy cheat,

“ With any wish so mean as to be great ;

“ Continue, Heaven, still from me to remove

“ The humble blessings of that life I love.”

The fears that had sometimes intruded themselves regarding his father's affairs, had at this moment lost much of their force. He soothed himself with the idea, that, let what would happen, he could retire to some farm or cottage, and spend the remainder of his days in contented enjoyment of the scenery of Nature, and the intellectual faculties with which Heaven had endowed him.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

DURING the three or four succeeding days, the repeated notes and messages which Fitz-Albini received from Mrs. Bracey absolutely compelled him to go to Orleton, to avoid the continuance of so horrid a persecution.

He had not been at Orleton since his infancy, but had some recollection of the kindness of Mr. Bracey to himself when a little boy. He therefore felt pleasure at the renewal of his acquaintance, and was received by Mr. Bracey with

with a sort of good-natured civility, which soon put an end to the embarrassment of an introductory visit.—Mrs. Bracey, however, soon contrived that her husband should be called away on some important business; while herself undertook to conduct Fitz-Albini through all the wonders of a rambling old house, in which she promised him the sight of some very antient pictures, and some very rare books.

Fitz-Albini did not expect much; but he found such ridiculous old daubings, by way of antient paintings, and a few of the most vulgar folios of a country-gentleman's library of the last century, by way of rare books; that it was with extreme difficulty he kept his temper,

temper, or his countenance ; while Mrs. Bracey, by sometimes affecting to stumble over the old floors, or along the dark galleries, or frequently calling for his assistance through the strange irregularities of the house, either fell into his arms, or filled him with distress and anger at the awkward situations into which she put him.

When the pictures, the books, and the wonders of the house, no longer afforded subjects for her volubility, she entered into the characters of the neighbourhood, of whom she told such strange and improbable scandal, which, as to many he knew to be most entire and most bitter, though very stupid, fiction, that he began to think her understanding
was

was a little deranged ; yet it was so void of all ingenuity, that he could hardly believe it arose from such a cause. An unfortunate window discovered Brimfield, the seat of Sir James Pickman, at a distance. This gave rise to the questioning Fitz-Albini's opinion of Miss Pickman's beauty ; which, half-ill-naturedly, he commended in very strong terms.

The lady's little ferret-eyes immediately sparkled with anger—and with a sort of hysteric laugh, and a shrill tone, she cried out—“ You don't know all “ about her, that I do ! ” — “ Very probably, Madam ! ” Fitz-Albini replied very coldly.—

This

This repressing answer put an end for a short time to the conversation.—When they returned to the drawing-room, they found there Mr. Bracey and Miss St. Leger ; the latter of whom Mrs. Bracey thought proper to set off by every little art her slender understanding, fertile in such expedients, could suggest. Whether it was that she wished to make use of the attractions of her youthful person in opposition to Miss Pickman, or that she was willing for once to do a good-natured thing, by way of *variety*, during the rest of the day she did not cease to pursue the same plan.—She placed her next Fitz-Albini at dinner—she told a thousand instances of her obliging disposition—she called forth the exercise of her accomplishments—till
the

the poor girl, wearied out, retired from the room ; and, on her return, discovered by her swollen eyes she had been in tears. The game she was playing was not undetected by Fitz-Albini ; and he would have shrunk with rudeness from Miss St. Leger, had not her sensibility excited his compassion.

Once more the time arrived at which he found himself extricated from such troublesome society. As he mounted his horse, twilight was coming on ; and a drizzling rain hastened the close of the day. He walked, however, a footpace, and gave the full range again to his expansive mind. “ Detestable society ! ” said he to himself : “ if this
“ be society ; rather let me wander all
“ my

“ my days among the woods, that have
“ never been marked by a human foot-
“ step ! There at least I can enjoy a
“ creation more consonant to my ideas
“ of human dignity ! My fancy will
“ form to itself a world of its own,
“ consistent with my early dreams of
“ life !”—

Thus he wandered on, lost in meditations ; and at length digested his ideas in the following

SONNET.

Along the lone wood shrieks the hollow blast ;
And quick the doubling mists obscure the day :
Where the voice echoes, or the windows cast
Their distant glancing lights, I seek my way :
Before

Before me, thick and sheety vapours spread,
Seem, like a lake, to level all the vale;
While drives the drizzling fog, and o'er my
head

The bending clouds in pillowy darkness sail.
These are the scenes, in which, howe'er I rove
In doubtful paths, my fancy loves to rise!
Ideal buildings people every grove,
And fairy forests bound th' approaching skies!
Clad in the grey obscurity, I view
More beauteous scenes than Nature ever knew!

The exercise of this ride gave him a
night of sound sleep; and he rose with
refreshed spirits to indulge, uninter-
ruptedly, in his own studies, and his
own solitary walks.

The Autumn was hastening on—the
greater part of the corn had been already
imbarnd;

imbarned : and the leaves of the forest began to assume a golden tinge, the most rich and happy of all hues for the imitation of a painter. A kind of liquid splendour sat upon the whole surrounding scenery. Herds of all sorts peopled the stubbles, and the woods ; and even the swine, which, at this time of the year while they move in numbers, are very picturesque, began to take a distant range to feed on the falling acorns, as well as the refuse of the fickle and the scythe.

Amid such scenes Fitz-Albini forgot all his cares, and felt nothing but the most exalted pleasure.—He had crossed the most distant boundary of the park ; and was already some miles advanced
beyond

beyond it, immersed in his own reflections, when, from the top of an hill, he surveyed a large castellated mansion beneath him, which he soon recollected to be *Penshurst*, the venerable seat of the illustrious family of *Sydney*.

As he had not surveyed it for many years, he determined to hasten into the valley, and view it again. He enquired for the old housekeeper, who had shewn it to him when a boy; but she was not still in her office.—He had, however, the satisfaction of hearing she was still yet alive; and of visiting her at a neat house in the village, where the majestic old woman, at the age of ninety-seven, or ninety-eight, still retained not only the traces of her former beauty, but her faculties,

faculties, and even her chearfulness—though she sighed at the fallen glories of the dear old hall, where she remembered so much splendour and hospitality, and at least five generations of its once-gay and renowned inhabitants.

Fitz-Albini could scarcely walk over this stately building, now so chilly and deserted, without being overwhelmed with melancholy.—The gallery of portraits, the curious pictures, by Holbein, of Edward the Sixth, the Duke of Northumberland, Sir Henry Sidney, and many others; the numerous likenesses by Jansen, Vandyke, Lely, &c. filled him with admiration.—The recurrence to his mind of so many illustrious names, Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Ben

Ben Jonson, Algernon Sidney, and Waller, almost confounded him with the fulness of his ideas.

He strolled slowly up the park ; and sat an hour in listening to the screams, and watching the manœuvres, of the heronry still subsisting there.

During this hour, the only ideas, that were sufficiently distinct to reduce themselves into language, assumed the following form—

SONNET,

SONNET,

WRITTEN AT PENSHURST.

Behold thy triumphs, Time ! what silence reigns
Along these lofty and majestic walls !

Ah ! where are regal Sidney's pompous trains* ?
Where Philip's tuneful lyre, whose dying falls
Could melt the yielding nymphs, and lovesick
swains † ?

Ah ! where th' undaunted figure, that appalls
E'en heroes ? Where the lute, that on the
plains

The bending trees ‡ round Sachariffa calls ?

* Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the
Marches, who kept his court at Ludlow Castle.

† Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia.

‡ Alluding to Waller's lines, written at
Penshurst.

And are they fled ! Their day's for ever past !

Heroes and poets moulder in the earth !

No sound is heard but of the wailing blast
Through the lone rooms, where echoed crowded
Mirth !

Yet on their 'semblance Melancholy pores,

And all the faded splendour soon restores.

To every mind, which reflects deeply,
the extinction or decay of an antient
or eminent family is a subject of real
and very profound regret. It is true,
that to antiquity and lustre of descent
both understanding and virtue are often
wanting. But, if ability be more fre-
quently conspicuous in those who have
climbed from a low origin up the steep
and dangerous ascent of ambition, vir-
tue in such families is undoubtedly by
far more rare. Nor is ability always re-
quisite

quifite to attain the point of rank and wealth :—and it is too certain that the prosperous road is generally through the defiles of corruption and vice. The depraved heart, the interested sentiments, the debased, however acute, understanding, of a low man grown great, are too apt to throw a tincture over the characters of his family for at least a century ; whereas that race which hereditary honours and affluence have long placed above what is low, servile, and meanly ambitious, have a much greater probability of being distinguished by elevated ideas, and pure and independent souls.

A lawyer, a soldier, and a sailor, who often attain the highest honours their

country has to bestow, do not arrive at their respective ranks till a period of life at which their manners and their notions are already immoveably confirmed in the mould of their origin; nor can the outward decorations of place and title alter the early habits of the man. If such be the effects in a liberal profession, what must they be in those who have ascended from the lowest gradations of office merely through their servility, and the dextrous readiness with which an early acquaintance with the drudgery of the meanest business, and a total freedom from the nice restraints of honour and conscience, have fitted them to be useful to the ministry of their country?

If

If once the respect that has in all ages and nations been paid to birth, be totally abandoned; if hereditary riches, education, and those habits of early life, which give exalted sentiments, and expanded powers of thinking, be not considered as generally necessary to qualify men for the superior orders of society—it will soon appear that all the principles upon which subordination of ranks can be defended by the philosopher, are subverted; that all the evils without the advantages of inequality of conditions are imposed upon mankind, that those, whom long possession has given the privilege of enjoying precedence without exciting envy, and who are the natural defenders of an established government, become discontented at having others

put over their heads, who rouse the rivalry of the lowest, as having been so lately their equals.—So that every order is excited to a restless and dangerous fermentation ; while the meanest, and the worst of mankind, trample in bloated wealth and honours, on the necks of the people, because they are the most supple and useful instruments of the temporary purposes of a minister !

CHAPTER IV.

FITZ-ALBINI enjoyed the walk in his return from Penrhurst as much as that which brought him thither. The sun, now hastening towards the West, shewed the landscape in new colours, arrayed new hills in its golden lights, and left in deep shadow the mountains whose brilliancy had attracted him as he went.

While beholding the scenery around him, or busied in his own reflections,

he seemed to "forget all time ;" and evening was fast approaching before he reached again the park pales. — He mounted at length over the stepping-style ; and was delighted to find himself within its precincts. The rich luxuriance of wild wood that seemed to crowd around him excited affection, admiration, and rapture. He repeated to himself some lines of his friend Hastings, which seemed congenial to his present feelings and situation.

LINES,

L I N E S,
WRITTEN ON THE RECOLLECTION OF
****, HIS NATIVE PLACE.
BY F. H. ESQ. 1792.

“ Sweet native spot! at thy long-cherish’d name
Again awakes the Muse’s dying flame:

It wakes, and lights me to thy ’tangled shades,
Thy groves umbrageous, and thy leaf-strown
glades;

Thy hills, from whence the blue horizon round,
With distant spires, and towers, and seas, is
crown’d;

Thy glens, where, deep-retir’d, my childish days
Too oft were spent in dreams of future praise!—

All rife, and, colour’d in thy fairy light,
Are bodied forth before my ravish’d fight,

Bright as when first upon my tender mind

The deep-hued forms of Nature were design’d.—

But, oh! my soul! though bright each object's hue,
 Does Joy again salute thee at the view?
 Have years departed, though they yet bespeak
 No silver hairs, no furrows on my cheek;
 Say, have they past, nor left behind a sting,
 Regret's sharp poison o'er their charms to fling?—
 Thou spreading oak, beneath whose branches
 dark

My childhood wont sweet Nature's voice to mark;
 To see the golden orb at morning rise,
 And watch its crimson fall with wistful eyes;
 Why at thine image is my beating breast
 With grief and pensive discontent oppress?—

Ah! now hoarse hollow murmurs meet my ear;
 And thus the deep reproach I seem to hear!

“Why was thine infant mind each rural sight
 “Form'd to receive, and tremble with delight?
 “Why thus thy heart to beat, to thrill, to glow,
 “And feel with keener anguish ev'ry woe?

“Oh why, while stretch'd beneath my cov'ring
 “shade,

“Were forms ærial to thy view display'd?

“Why

“ Why did such visions wild thy soul entrance,
“ And fairy circles to thy fancy dance ?
“ To waste in restless indolence the day,
“ Or seem 'mid Mirth's loud sons, while mourn-
“ ful, gay ?
“ In courts to bow, in forums to dispute,
“ 'Mid Folly's thoughtless talkers to be mute ?
“ With fault'ring voice, and looks that speak the
“ fool,
“ Helpless to sit, while Dulness gives the rule ?
“ To rival country squires, and city beaux,
“ To seek the palm the chase or course bestows ?
“ To vie with those, whose hard unfeeling heart
“ Can the sure pow'r of Victory impart ?
“ The paths of mawkish Dissipation run ;
“ To ride, to drive, to game—to be undone ?
“ Ah, no ! Far other hopes thy youth design'd !
“ To try the nobler contests of the mind !
“ The trembling motions of the heart to trace ;
“ And catch the beauteous hues of Nature's face !
“ Thy talent wasted, how wilt thou atone
“ The flagrant crime before Heaven's awful
“ throne !

“ Ere yet old Age upon thy fancy lours,
“ Weakens thy hopes, and freezes all thy pow’rs,
“ The flying moments seize; the path pursue
“ That opes Fame’s purer chaplets to thy view !”
Enough, lov’d Tree ! Ah, now the murmurs
close !

The shadowy branches hang in deep repose !
Then once more, O ye boughs, whose soothing
gloom
Can with fresh vigour imp the Muse’s plume,
Cherish the dreams, that fir’d my childish brain,
And bring a just ambition back again !—

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Fitz-Albini waked, the morning after his return from Orleton, the strange visit of the preceding day had left such a singular impresson upon his mind, that, for some minutes, he found it difficult to persuade himself it was not a dream.—And, when he really reflected that such a ridiculous character as Mrs. Bracey existed, he burst several times into excessive laughter; while at other moments her qualities, as mischievous as they were absurd, excited his indignation and horror; and he could not

not help feeling much pity for the disagreeable, mortifying, and even dangerous situation of Miss St. Leger.

Mrs. Bracey did not suffer much time to elapse before she gave him new opportunities of observation.—By manoeuvres, of which he could not be aware, she drew him into new visits at Orleton, or new engagements in the neighbourhood, at which she contrived to be present. Nor was her companion, who was always used as a counterpoise to the attractions of Miss Pickman, absent.—

Miss Pickman, however, seemed to gain upon the notice of Fitz-Albini. Her assiduous attentions were too powerful a flattery for him entirely to withstand.

stand. For who is proof against flattery? And, as her fortune had made her by no means unused to distinction, her preference, under such circumstances, much increased the compliment.

Yet this rather inflamed than extinguished Mrs. Bracey's endeavours to supplant her. Malignant scandal, and gross falsehood, were busily employed by her for this inexcusable purpose.—She whispered in Fitz-Albini's ear, that Miss Pickman had made him the object of her ridicule and scorn behind his back; and only received his civilities to display his presumption, and her victory.—All her foibles and defects she exaggerated with low art and diabolical delight, while poor Miss St. Leger was innocently made
an

an instrument, in whom she exhibited a contrasted picture of all excellence and beauty. The amiable girl, too well acquainted with the heart of her panegyrist, was little conscious of the praises bestowed on her, yet often found herself in most indelicate and perplexing situations. And from conversations, which she could not always avoid to hear, she shrunk, not indeed with abhorrence, but with the most cruel embarrassment, from Fitz-Albini.

Fitz-Albini, doubtful of the sincerity of Miss Pickman, who had never been pleasing to him but by contrast with Mrs. Bracey ; and, alarmed and piqued at the coldness and reserve of Miss St. Leger, whose beauty and simplicity he
could

could not but admire, felt his natural diffidence alarmed, and resolved to withdraw himself from such scenes of unallayed mortification. For what could he find to console him in the gross partiality of Mrs. Bracey! a partiality which had been equally displayed to a thousand others! and which, he doubted not, would be equally displayed again!

Nor was the manner of Miss St. Ledger less striking, when he recollected the style and the manners of the house in which she lived, a house perpetually full of gentlemen, and characterized by freedom and familiarity; which yet her easy dignity always kept at a respectful, though not formal, distance.— But, if *he* was accidentally left alone with

with her, he observed her self-possession instantly fly; her colour go and return; and her embarrassment so great, that she always took the earliest opportunity to make her escape from him. His pride was alarmed; and he took no pains to overcome a dislike which he was not conscious of deserving.

The library of Dallington, its wood-walks, and its lawns, afforded him again a quiet retreat, and a new current for his ideas.—He endeavoured to examine his own character and situation with impartiality.—He saw so many young men prosperous and courted, to whom without flattery it was impossible not to feel his own superiority, that he strove in vain

vain to find out the cause, why he was less liked, less beloved, and more the object of malignity, than they.—He saw men, whose conduct was marked by a total want of principle, whose understanding was small, and whose manners were undistinguished by politeness or gaiety, received with good-will wherever they went, praised by many, and censured by none. He saw fortune fall upon them without envy, and adversity attack them with universal expressions of pity.

Himself he saw often neglected, and sometimes passed by with gross affront.—The virtues he occasionally displayed, or the wisdom that at times burst from him, and silenced all opposition, he saw followed

followed by unwilling and extorted praise.—And he saw a thousand tongues ready to burst forth and overwhelm him at the least deviations from rectitude, or even from the appearances of rectitude. — An inequality of temper and of mind, an indignation and haughtiness at folly and meanness, which seemed by fits to possess him, he was conscious often raised the bitterest enmity against him. But, when he wished to please, and the softness and benevolence of his heart discovered themselves, it seemed strange that he should be the object of neglect and aversion.

These mortifying reflections on himself were not relieved by turning his attention to his father.—There he saw old
age

age embittered not only by disease, but by a fretfulness and lowness of spirits, which seemed little short of despondence. No soothing would alleviate his gloom—and tenderness seemed only to aggravate the deep vexation that appeared to prey upon his mind.

At length, however, he entered into a serious conversation with his son, in which he used such arguments, or entreaties, that Arthur determined in earnest to embrace the propositions that came from Sir James Pickman to his father; and, if in truth, as he was now taught (contrary to Mrs. Bracey's assertions), Miss Pickman was partial to him, to embrace the good fortune thrown in his way,

way, and endeavour to make his father happy.

Two or three meetings accordingly took place ; at which Arthur persuaded himself that Miss Pickman was not disagreeable to him, and that her affection for him would secure his future felicity. —He could not, however, so hastily persuade himself to make a proposal, on which the colour of his future life so much depended.—

Ruinour, never at rest, soon informed Mrs. Bracey what was going forward.— Though this wretched woman could have no other object in the pursuit of poor Fitz-Albini, than the temporary indulgence of a flirtation with an agreeable young

young man, to whom she had yet no preference which would not equally arise to a thousand others equally new to her; she determined to defeat the person, whom she chose to consider as her rival, at the expence of sacrificing all the future happiness of two families, to which she had no reason whatever to do the smallest injury. She therefore obtruded herself into every company where her emissaries informed her they were to meet; and used all those arts, in which the weakest heads, as well as the worst dispositions, are so fertile, to derange the scheme which she believed to be going forward.

She began, however, to have some suspicions of her own powers of attraction.—

tion.—It was with the more eagerness and pains that she set forth the charms of Miss St. Leger, who by nature was so pre-eminent to her neighbours.—

With what fictions and what encouragement she endeavoured to feed this innocent girl, it would not be easy to guess.—But, though she let her not into her designs, Miss St. Leger's good sense suggested to her some faint suspicions of her schemes; and her natural delicacy shrunk from being obtruded, under any circumstances, upon Fitz-Albini.

Yet her beauty was so very fascinating, her manners so simple, and her distress so very violent and unaffected when the unfeeling indelicacy of Mrs. Bracey attempted to make her the instrument of
her

her plots, that there were moments at which she withdrew the attention, and shook the resolution, of Fitz-Albini.

This was not unobserved by Mrs. Bracey, who with new hope multiplied her contrivances to detach him from her rival. At length she by some means got him to spend a week at Orleton—and, to make it as pleasant as possible, she filled the house with a party, among whom there were some very sensible and agreeable people; yet so intermixed with characters of all hues as to render it a medley, which, by the strong contrast, produced a very whimsical entertainment.

Of these, Colonel Fordingbridge, and Mr. Yapton, a young ensign of militia,

set off each other's absurdities by mutual ridicule and contempt; yet Mrs. Bracey appeared delighted with both, while each in his turn, through some very perverse and vicious taste, seemed to pay homage to her attractions.—Colonel Fordingbridge was a reserved formal soldier of fifty, who seemed better fitted for a library than a camp, having read assiduously, and treasured up a mass of very considerable learning, but, having no fire or imagination to animate it, was dull and uninteresting; and, when he attempted the gallantry which he conceived belonged to the colour of the coat which he wore, exhibited a struggle, between the cold awkwardness of his nature and the gaiety which he endeavoured to assume, perfectly absurd.—On the other hand,

hand, Mr. Yapton, without sense, knowledge, or manners, displayed a pert kind of empty foppery, more disgusting in proportion to the confidence with which it was believed to be the airy ease of fashion, triumphant over the pedantry of age.—In Colonel Fordingbridge there was profound information, and shrewd sense; but in Mr. Yapton there was nothing to counterbalance his disgusting folly.—Yet the strangest instance of impudence was exhibited by this young hero in the mimicry and low kind of buffoonery with which he strove to disturb the risible faculties of the company, at every conversation, upon any important topic.—Besides these, there were a Scotch nobleman; two clergymen; an East-Indian; a clerk of one of the offices in

London ; an artist ; two country squires, of whom one was a Baronet ; and four ladies, of whom three were young.

They who know the world must have observed how many schemes of gallantry are carried on, and how many opportunities are afforded, in large companies, particularly where the characters are various and unconnected ; and the modern affectation of freedom and ease produces situations of which the design is not immediately developed, and any strange appearance is carried off by raillery and laughter.

Mrs. Bracey was too well acquainted with all this ; and the week was passed in a kind of hurry, riot, irregularity, and
whim,

whim, at which grave people would indeed have trembled for their daughters, though young men, while they condemned, could not but occasionally enjoy it.

But the simplicity and good disposition of Jane St. Leger seemed hitherto to have kept her pure amid this society.

It was impossible for her always to avoid the design by which she was frequently seated next Fitz-Albini, or left alone with him: but, whether from disinclination, or from the knowledge of his intentions regarding Miss Pickman, which alone would have been sufficient cause of reserve to her, her conduct was particularly cautious, and her conversation restrained.—Once, indeed, she complained

delicately of her distressing dependence on Mrs. Bracey, and her horror of her disgusting character—and expressed sentiments, which at once did honour to her heart and her understanding.—Fitz-Albini felt his pity very strongly excited; but he recollected that pity was a dangerous passion for him to indulge towards such an object at this critical time.

Jane St. Leger had observed in Fitz-Albini a greatness of sentiment, and a kind of lofty understanding which she often admired—but her good sense had remarked so much deceit, and want of principle, in most of the men she had seen amongst Mrs. Bracey's acquaintance, notwithstanding their occasional professions, that she did not by any means put full confidence

confidence in his character—and she was not always sure that he received the advances of Mrs. Bracey with the disapprobation he pretended.

Gaiety, frolic, and noise, marked the conviviality of the week. Miss Halton was the favourite of the lively; Miss Fleetwood, of the sentimental; and Miss Dormer, of the fox-hunters, a kind of gentlemen who are well known to come under neither of those characters; while Jane St. Leger, with beauty above them all, having no finesse, affectation, or assumption, attracted less attention, and fewer followers, though sometimes unwilling homage was paid to her seductive person.

Miss Halton had been educated in London; was accomplished in all the petty arts of dancing, languages, music, and drawing; knew and employed the shops of the most fashionable milleners, and other dealers in ladies' dress; had frequented all the public places; and been introduced at the most fashionable assemblies of the year; and was acquainted with all those petty topics, those scandalous anecdotes, and those forward and vain characters, which were the reigning subjects of the year among the insignificant and contemptible beings who ridiculously call themselves "*The World.*"—She possessed a confidence and ready pertness, which was mistaken for vivacity and wit, and a showy appearance, derived from the artifices of
her

her dress, which was mistaken for beauty.—She affected the airs of rank, though nothing could be lower than her birth—and pre-eminence of understanding and knowledge of life; though nothing could be more shallow and stupid than she was, and nothing more ignorant, except in a little of the surface of the petty forms of the narrow circle in which she moved.

Miss Fleetwood was a *Blue-Stockings*—She was acquainted with all the reigning authors; could tell the poems, plays, and novels, that were coming out the next winter; and moralized upon books, and men, in such tinsel and tedious language as to give a disgust to literature,

and make Genius ashamed of its occupations.

Miss Dormer was totally free from the affectation of the other two.—She was large, handsome, gay, and talkative; not without a tolerable understanding, and moderately-polished manners.

Lord Carnwath was of the antient nobility of Scotland, but of small fortune; a foldier of plain understanding, and manly manners, who had led a life of activity and hardship in the service of his country—and by a generous frankness, and the esteem arising from reflection on his military character, was everywhere interesting and beloved. The

contrast

contrast of his character to that of Mr. Baugham, the East-Indian, a man rolling in riches, but crafty, vulgar, and mean, and betraying in every word and action his sordid origin, was particularly striking—while the women, paying their homage one while to rank, and another to wealth, were held in solicitous doubt of which to make their final preference.

But yet none of them could bear the slightest appearance of admiration paid to Jane St. Leger, even by the other men of the party: and the attentions of Sir Thomas Bulmer, and Mr. Stydolfe, were claimed and occupied, with peculiar solicitude, by Mrs. Dormer, for her daughter.

In the collision of this society, the character of Fitz-Albini had gradually obtained a tacit superiority, unwillingly felt. He was particularly hated by Colonel Fordingbridge, who, fancying in himself the attractions of youth, and believing the other to engross too much of the conversation of Miss St. Leger, resolved to place himself on one side of her at table ; while the other by Mrs. Bracey's contrivance was always occupied by Fitz-Albini.

Fitz-Albini occasionally addressed himself to her, whose sense he found so much above that of her companions—but Mrs. Bracey herself managed principally to engage him. Nor was the opportunity lost by Colonel Fordingbridge, who

who exerted all his powers of pleasing ; but sometimes found Miss St. Leger cold, and sometimes absent. He at length determined to excite her attention by all the powers he possessed ; and was relating a story of some interest, and flattered himself she was listening, when, as Mrs. Bracey was engaged in a conversation with Fitz-Albini, she turned suddenly pale, then red, and, in apparent agitation, hastened out of the room.

The incident did not pass without the smiles and sneers of the women, which were not a little increased when she returned to it, with her eyes evidently swollen with tears. Col. Fordingbridge was sullen and gloomy ; and Fitz-Albini looked anxious and alarmed : but Miss

St.

St. Leger, while she seemed anxious to recover the appearance of composure, shrunk involuntarily from the enquiries and attentions of both.

Yet Mrs. Bracey observed something in Fitz-Albini's manner to her, which made her think that she might now invite the Pickman family to dinner, with sufficient probability of their returning mortified.—They were accordingly engaged to join the present party at Orleton.—Miss Pickman entered with hope and pleasure; nor through the day did she discover any strong symptoms of disappointment.

The next morning (for they slept that night at Orleton), Miss Pickman, with
almost

almost the whole party in the house, sallied forth to take a walk.—They had not proceeded far, when the rest, as if by design, lingered behind, and left Fitz-Albini and Miss Pickman to proceed by themselves.

“There they go,” said Miss Halton; “I am glad of it! poor vulgar things, just fit for each other!”

“When are they to be married?” said Mr. Yapton.—“Oh dear! don’t ask me,” she replied.—“do you think I keep a register of the marriages of country squires?” Then, seeing Sir Thomas Bulmer at her elbow, she turned it off, with something between a toss and a laugh.—

“Fitz-
Albini!”

“Fitz-Albini is the most odious, insufferable fellow, I ever met with,” said Mr. Baughham.—

“He is, indeed,” said Mr. Stydolfe.—“I would venture my bay mare against Tom Sidenham’s old blind hackney, if I were to take him out for a whole winter together with my hounds, at the end of the winter he would not know one dog from another.”—

“And then he knows nothing of the gay world,” said Mr. Yapton; “he was never in the militia in his life!”—

“He is a quiz and a milkop,” said Mr. Grinfed, a young clergyman; “for, though

“ though he lives within fix miles of our
 “ club at Gangham-lane, he has never
 “ been once there ; and refused to be a
 “ member, though you, Stydolfe, once
 “ offered to propose him !”

“ So I did, my boy,” replied Sty-
 dolfe ; “ but how d—d lucky we were
 “ he did not accept it !”

“ But he is a sensible fellow, and a
 “ fine-spirited fellow, for all that,” said
 Lord Carnwarth.

“ A little too proud, and self-sufficient,”
 said Colonel Fordingbridge, dryly.

“ A hypocrite,” said Mr. Baugham,
 “ profligate, though sly”—

“ Somewhat

“Somewhat fickle, and somewhat
“mercenary!” said Miss Fleetwood,
with affected calmness.

“O, we women like a little of the
“rake; do we not, Miss St. Leger?”
said Miss Dormer.

“I hope not,” replied Miss St. Leger,
in confusion.

“A very pretty match, I think,” said
Sir Thomas Bulmer; “the arms of Sir
“James Pickman, Knight, citizen, buff-
“belt-maker, banker, and Baronet,
“will add a very useful blot to the
“’scutcheon of that haughty old square-
“toes of Dallington.”

“And

“And the lady too—see, how fond
 “she is!” said Miss Halton. “I pro-
 “test, she has lived in these very charm-
 “ing solitudes till she fancies herself
 “absolutely in love. See how she hangs
 “upon his arm—do but observe, my
 “dear Miss St. Leger! I protest, it is
 “very entertaining!—I would give a
 “great deal, if our sweet friend Mrs.
 “Bracey was but here at this moment—
 “would not you, my dear?—Oh, do
 “look, pray look! What a pretty pa-
 “thetic tale! What pretty sentiments
 “she must be telling him! I dare say,
 “he is vastly delighted!”

“Yes, yes,” added Colonel Fording-
 bridge; “the proud fellow, I warrant

“you,

“you, likes better to receive homage
“than to pay it.”—

At that moment Mrs. Bracey overtook the party: she partly heard, as well as saw, the subjects of their conversation: she came panting, and out of breath; and had scarce time to address any body, before she gave a piercing shriek—exclaimed, “O the wretch! O the brute!” and sunk back, as if in a fainting fit, into the arms of Colonel Fordingbridge; from which she did not seem to recover without much difficulty, and many attentions; while those who surrounded her were staring at each other, some with repressed smiles, and some with real terror—and, amongst the rest, Jane St.

St. Leger, to whom she seemed to direct her calls for assistance, as if she had been her servant, between fright, vexation, and concealed disgust, appeared in an agitation a thousand times more real than her own.

CHAPTER VI.

FITZ-ALBINI and Miss Pickman knew nothing of what had passed. Yet when they joined the party again, they perceived in the countenances of all something strange, which not a little distressed them.

Mrs. Bracey had retired again, to meditate revenge; for which she cared not what sacrifices she made, nor what mischief she produced.

Miss Pickman felt her delicacy alarmed; and the mind of Fitz-Albini appeared

peared to work with a mixture of doubt, anger, sorrow, disgust, and mortification.—A cloud hung over his countenance, which kept in awe those who had spoken so freely behind his back. He joined the conversation only by fits; and contradicted occasionally with an asperity and scorn, which were by no means the character of his heart. But now, alas! he was peculiarly awake to affronts; for, conscious he was falling into a scheme formed by others, which his own bosom did not justify, he felt lessened in his own esteem. He watched, therefore, and sometimes misinterpreted the manners and the looks of his companions: and was ever ready to take fire at a doubtful expression, or an innocent smile.

Miss

Miss Pickman, who was, or fancied herself, deeply attached to him, had not the resolution to resent the coldness, and even rudeness with which he now treated her: but sometimes pursued him with a strange faithfulness, and sometimes sat overwhelmed in silent sorrow, when he shunned her. When he talked to Mrs. Bracey, she was disgusted with the woman; yet it raised no jealousy: but she was more alarmed by the beauty and attractions of Jane St. Leger, to whom, if he addressed his conversation, or even by chance turned his eyes, she felt an instant depression at her heart, and a trembling convulsion over her whole frame. Perhaps this was not perceived by Fitz-Albini, whom it ill suited to inflict such cruel pain; who, however,

now

now appeared rather to seek than avoid these conversations, which, yet, she could not often accuse Miss St. Leger of encouraging, notwithstanding she was now and then gradually drawn into some long and interesting discussion, artfully fomented by Mrs. Bracey, in the eagerness of which she for some time forgot herself, and alternately listened and replied with too apparent delight, till the evident distress of Miss Pickman revived her prudence and forbearance.

At these moments Fitz-Albini's spirits broke forth from the weight and the gloom that at other times totally overwhelmed him. When they ceased, he sunk again; and kept a moody kind of reserve and silence, which rendered his

manners rude, repressing, and, to most of the company, almost hateful. Many of the women rallied Miss Pickman on the strangeness of her choice, and attempted to excite her revenge at his insulting neglect. At the same time, Sir Thomas Bulmer and Mr. Yapton were as assiduous as Fitz-Albini was cold.— But love is a perverse deity : their assiduities were as disgusting to her as his coldness was painful.

Yet occasionally Fitz-Albini seemed conscious of his own rudeness, and endeavoured to force a smile into his melancholy countenance, and, when his voice was directed to her, to soften the tones of it into a tenderness, which she received with too apparent delight, and
which

which only rendered his returning fits of sullen and mournful silence more afflicting to her.

Meanwhile Colonel Fordingbridge urged his suit to Miss St. Leger, with a kind of impudent perseverance, from which, though she shrunk from it with abhorrence, she could not always free herself. In her own room, and in lonely walks, she often sought for safety from his importunities; while her delicacy was particularly shocked at a kind of confidence, and self-satisfaction, which, whenever he met her in the presence of others, he displayed in his manner to her, as if she gave encouragement to his attentions. And whether in compliment to the finer feelings, the penetration, or

the severity, of Fitz-Albini; in his company she always felt more peculiarly hurt at this style of address. It was thus that, in ascending the staircase, Fitz-Albini heard the voice of the Colonel engaged in an eager conversation with her, when, as he opened the door into the gallery where they were, she instantly flew towards him, and, for a moment, seemed to catch his arm, pale and trembling, as if for protection, yet not uttering a word; and then suddenly, as if recollecting herself, sprang away again, and disappeared till dinner-time. Fitz-Albini, surprized, stood for a few moments motionless; and, before he had time to reflect upon it, Colonel Fordingbridge, after casting
upon

upon him a frown of angry vengeance, departed the other way.

As soon as Miss St. Leger had time to meditate upon the incident, the fiery tempers both of Fordingbridge and Fitz-Albini recurred to her mind; and she became miserable at the probability of a quarrel between them. In this she was confirmed, when, about an hour afterwards, she saw from her window Fitz-Albini walking in a hurried step in the park, with a letter in his hand, which, after perusing and re-perusing several times, he seemed to tear to pieces in a rage, and throw scornfully from him. She watched his motions with some solicitude, till he disappeared in the most distant parts of the park. She then

felt a pang and a terror she had never before experienced. She had often observed the moodyness of his mind: she had a horror of she knew not what, and felt a momentary impulse to go after him; but instantly recollected the impropriety of it. It then struck her, that she ought to go to Miss Pickman; but in a moment her heart recoiled from it; and, for the first time, the very idea of Miss Pickman gave a cold sick sensation at her heart, totally different from any feeling she had ever before known. She ran and listened at the end of Colonel Fordingbridge's room; and, as soon as she was convinced that he was there, she returned to her own chamber more easy, and, after having watched half an hour, at her window, at length saw Fitz-Albini slowly

slowly returning by the path he had gone, and followed him with her eyes safely to the door of the house, when she became more calm, and began to dress herself for dinner.

Miss Pickman, with some sense and exertion, endeavoured to fortify her mind to bear the mortifications of a passion which she found she could not subdue, and hoped that the caprices, as she believed them, of a triumphant vanity would soon be overcome by the more brilliant and virtuous qualities of the head and heart of Fitz-Albini; and that her constancy, her endeavours to make him happy, and the advantages of the fortune she should bring him, would gradually raise his gratitude, which she

must be content to let time ripen into love. The chilling sensations of neglect, the tortures of jealousy, she resolved, if she could not conquer, to hide.

Thus fortified, she entered the drawing-room before dinner. Many of the party were already there; Fitz-Albini, among the rest. He came up sooner than he was wont to do, with a collected carelessness of manner, which surprized and pleased her; though to one or two more acute observers it seemed too like despair to be very flattering.—He entered into a conversation, which, though it was cold, calm, and concise, yet was so much longer than was usual, that the change in his conduct drew general observation—

servation—Mrs. Bracey seemed in a perfect fever.

Miss St. Leger had not yet joined the party. She now entered the room: an alternate glow and paleness in her countenance seemed to indicate some hurry of spirits, but, added to a peculiarly becoming dress, gave a beauty to her appearance beyond what she had ever displayed before. Her address appeared a little embarrassed; and they who watched her looks might have seen, as she gradually turned her eyes round the room, a sudden paleness as they came to the corner where Fitz-Albini was engaged with Miss Pickman, and whence again she instantly averted them.

At dinner, if Miss Pickman was placed on one side of Fitz-Albini, Mrs. Bracey was determined that Miss St. Leger should occupy the other; notwithstanding the distress of the latter, who felt doubly alarmed by the fiery looks of Colonel Fordingbridge, already, as she feared, sufficiently enraged.

The business of this amiable girl was, therefore, if possible, to keep peace; and, by an endeavour at general conversations, of which Fitz-Albini and Fordingbridge were both so capable, to prevent jealousies and animosities, which the smallest spark would kindle into a flame. She made several attempts in vain. Miss Pickman, whose mind had never received that kind of cultivation, looked

looked mortified and unhappy.—This checked her for a time. But Colonel Fordingbridge having thrown out several taunting reflections, of which, though she was not sure Fitz-Albini heard them, yet, from a deep and increasing gloom that she saw in his expression, she feared the effects; she again challenged his attention by some observations, expressed with uncommon elegance, as well as the most engaging timidity, upon a subject on which she knew he was very fond of expatiating.—This was, the poetical merits and defects of Pope. Perhaps there was nothing new or peculiarly acute in what she said: but the beauty of the person from whom it came, the manner, and the propriety of it, made it appear irresistibly engaging, and awakened the

whole soul of Fitz-Albini, who cast upon her a look of mingled astonishment, admiration, and pleasure.

“Certainly, Miss St. Leger,” said he, after a long silence, “there are few
“subjects of criticism more difficult
“than to ascertain the merits of this extraordinary poet. When we read the
“Eloisa to Abelard; the Elegy on an
“Unfortunate Lady; and the Rape of
“the Lock; we are inclined to allow
“him the full praise of genius. Yet a
“large proportion of his works is surely
“deficient in all the higher qualities of
“poetry. No satire, no good sense, no
“knowledge of the world, no excellent
“moral axiom, however clear and polished be the language, and however
“har-

“harmonious be the versification, in
“which they are cloathed, can deserve
“the praise of such a name. Poetry
“must touch the soul by its subli-
“mity or its pathos, or it must fill the
“fancy by its imagery.”—He was go-
ing on, when he was rudely and con-
temptuously interrupted by Colonel For-
dingbridge.

“What,” cried he, addressing himself
to Miss St. Leger, “are these sublime
“whims that Fitz-Albini has got into
“his head? The wild notions of a
“boy! the sickly dreams of a ro-
“mance-reader! Give me the sterling
“sense of Pope, and I care not what
“becomes of your tinsel descriptions,
“and your whining complaints! Thank
“God,

“ God, I am past my childhood ! I
“ can relish the solid food of the mind !
“ But,”—pausing a moment, as if to re-
collect himself, and then anticipating
by his manner a triumph which he be-
lieved would be decisive,—“ I should
“ like to ask the gentleman, what Pope’s
“ writings are, if they are not poe-
“ try !”

The countenance of Fitz-Albini fired,
and Miss St. Leger grew pale, at the
shock of having kindled fresh sparks of
contention, where she had endeavoured
to appease. “ Colonel Fordingbridge’s
“ age,” he replied sarcastically, is a
“ lucky excuse for a coldness of taste,
“ which, I dare say, was the same at
“ twenty-two, as it is now at fifty-seven !

“ The

“ The question he so triumphantly puts,
“ as if it was unanswerable, seems to be
“ an humble imitation of a passage in
“ Dr. Johnson’s life of that poet, which
“ itself is not so convincing, as the
“ haughtiness with which it is asked
“ implies. ‘ If Pope,’ says that critic,
“ ‘ is not a poet, where is poetry to
“ ‘ be found ?’ However the question
“ be determined, the answer to this is
“ surely very obvious. Who is not
“ prepared to answer with the names of
“ Homer and Virgil, of Dante, Ariosto,
“ Chaucer, Tasso, Spenser, Shakspeare,
“ and Milton ? Poets, who, however
“ highly the merits of Pope may be esti-
“ mated, must be allowed to bear a
“ very slight similitude to him !”

“ Sir,”

“Sir,” said Colonel Fordingbridge,
“the humble imitation with which you
“tax me I scorn—I scorn to imitate
“any man—Dr. Johnson was a great
“critic, and the coincidence you men-
“tion is a more flattering compliment
“to me than any contemptuous language
“of yours can counterbalance. But you
“heroic gentlemen soar so much above
“us people of plain understanding, that
“I confess myself incapable of pursuing
“your flights!”

“They are flights, sir,” replied
Fitz-Albini, with an angry voice, and
fiery eye, “that I do not wonder you
“despise, when I recollect that it is
“the property of dull ———.”

Here

Here he suddenly stopped: they, who were watching the dispute, having for some time observed the distressed countenance of Miss St. Leger, saw her at this moment venture to give him a look of mixed agony and entreaty, which instantly softened his tone:—"I beg your pardon," he continued, "I had almost made too hasty an observation. I mean to say, that a taste for the more temperate productions of ratiocination is generally attended with a self-complacence, which does not characterize the votaries of imagination."

"I understand you, sir," returned Colonel Fordingbridge, who had not passed unobserved the look of Miss St. Leger,

Leger, and the sudden change of Fitz-Albini's tone and words—"another time
"and place will be more proper for
"this discussion."

"I think so too, sir!" added Fitz-Albini, very calmly; at which Miss Pickman, who yet scarcely understood the matter, turned very pale—but Miss St. Leger cast her eyes alternately on the two disputants, with looks of the most inexpressible grief and horror; while the greater part of the company were highly entertained; and Mrs. Bracey in particular was so much pleased, that she could not wait for the opportunity to express her delight, but as soon as possible rose to withdraw with the ladies, that she might talk over the high fun
in

in another room, and imagine what a pretty paragraph the affair would make in the news-papers; and what a conspicuous figure the description of the party at Orleton would make in the world.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

THE remainder of the time, till the gentlemen were summoned to tea, was somewhat embarrassed. In the drawing-room, Miss Pickman, whom, after the first alarm, some of the party had had the good-nature to satisfy and appease, endeavoured in vain, by all the powers of attraction she could use, to draw Fitz-Albini to converse with her; while, though silent and gloomy by fits, he at other moments excited a general and entertaining conversation, in which his peculiar energy and eloquence engaged

gaged the attention of the whole room. But Miss St. Leger was absent; and they, who watched him with a malignant curiosity, saw his eyes turned to the door whenever it opened, and his mind at those times, if he was talking, evidently bewildered.

As soon as cards and supper were over, he was retiring with eagerness to his room; when, in one of the apartments through which he passed, he saw a figure, which he soon knew to be Miss St. Leger, sitting near the window, as if contemplating the moon. She rose on his approach, and coming forward to meet him, he saw her agitation, and the tears, which she could ill suppress.

“ Mr.

“ Mr. Fitz-Albini,” she said, with a
 tremulous voice, “ I know I am incur-
 “ ring the appearance of impropriety in
 “ waiting for you secretly here, as I
 “ certainly have been :—but I believe I
 “ have been the means, though unin-
 “ tentionally, of drawing you into a
 “ quarrel with Colonel Fordingbridge,
 “ which makes me perfectly wretched.
 “ I know I have no right to influence
 “ you ; nor to ask or expect you would
 “ sacrifice what is deemed honour, or a
 “ just feeling of resentment, for my
 “ sake. But, when you recollect it was
 “ to prevent, instead of creating, a dis-
 “ pute with a fiery and ill-tempered
 “ man, that I began the conversation,
 “ which has been the cause of this un-
 “ fortunate affair, I appeal to your ge-
 “ nerosity

“nerosity for —— for ——,” hesitating, and, for a moment, lifting up her beautiful eyes, which were drowned in tears, and instantly withdrawing them again, “—— for the good intentions I had, “to induce you to make a little sacrifice “of foolish punctilios, and some small “effort at a peaceful termination of an “affair, which will otherwise sink me “into wretchedness for life.”

Surprise, admiration, and tenderness, overwhelmed Fitz-Albini for some moments: he stood silent, and motionless: she trembled, and turned pale, and even fell on her knees, and, with uplifted hands, cried, “I intreat you, sir, I most “earnestly intreat you, to ——!” He recovered from his astonishment; and, instantly

instantly raising her up, interrupted her,
“For Heaven’s sake, Miss St. Leger,”
he said, “do not distress me so! do not,
“I beseech you, do not put this insur-
“ferable trial upon me! do not ask
“what to you ——— but forgive me—I
“know not what I say—there is madness
“in all this! How my brain beats!—
“my father!—my father!” Then,
turning his eyes upon her—“but do
“you ask it? If you ask! what! though
“disgrace and ruin attend it, what can
“I ref- - - yet let me fly from you!
attempting to withdraw his hand, which
Miss St. Leger now held fast, while
her fright at his unaccountable distrac-
tion overcame all other reflections.—
“Mr. Fitz-Albini,” she said, in a ten-
der tremulous voice, “be calm! I
“did

“ did not mean to agitate you ! Far,
 “ very far, indeed, from it, as Heaven
 “ is my witness ! I only have intreated,
 “ and still intreat, that a life so good,
 “ so valuable as yours, may not be put
 “ in danger by means of a being so
 “ insignificant, and so wretched as I !”

“ Do not speak so tenderly, Miss St.
 “ Leger, I intreat ! lest I should be un-
 “ done for ever ! Call me a villain, as
 “ I am ; and I can bear it—but this
 “ softness, this angelic goodness—this
 “ beauty !”—He paused, and, turning
 his softened eyes upon her, lifted her
 hand to his lips.—She scornfully with-
 drew it, and said, in an altered tone of
 voice, “ Forbear, sir ! I thought Mr.
 “ Fitz-Albini had been too generous to
 VOL. I. H “ insult

“ insult her, whose innocent anxiety for
“ his safety gave him the opportunity !”
—Her colour instantly fled, and, having
endeavoured to support herself, by lean-
ing against the window, she sunk on the
chair, and fainted.

In a few minutes she recovered, and
silently and tremblingly withdrew, while
Fitz-Albini stood immersed in a con-
flict of feelings, which rendered him
incapable of uttering a word.—But
this interview, and the sensations he ex-
perienced during the short period Miss
St. Leger sat lifeless on the chair, sunk
into the bottom of his heart, and made
impressions his future life could not
efface.

The

The next day, having discovered such evident rudeness to Miss Pickman as roused her slow resentment, and having had a correspondence of several letters with Colonel Fordingbridge, he withdrew to his father's house at Dallington.

His father he found sinking under anxiety, and the rapid progress of age, but not a little solicitous to hear of the success of his attentions to the family of Pickman. The painful task therefore he had here to perform; the difficulty of evasion, and his incapability of a falsehood, rendered his situation truly uneasy.

A new train of feelings occupied his bosom, and gave a tinge to all the objects

around him. The sun went down with a deeper crimson, and the shades of the forest assumed a richer hue. The mighty charms of Nature, the winds, the agitated air, the scattered leaves, the bending, groaning trees, and the sweeping clouds, seemed to brace his frame, and at once to soothe, and elevate his soul.

SONNET.

O what is wealth, in pride of heart he said,
 Compar'd with you, ye treasures of the mind?
 O what the tinsel toys, in which array'd,
 The rich man strives the eye of Sense to blind?
 In these refreshing lawns, this haunted shade,
 How oft has Fancy splendid forms design'd;
 Whose gleams before th' enraptur'd fight display'd,
 Would leave the glare of Eastern Kings behind!

Can Wealth, the head to form, the heart to feel,
The soul, that lifts the man to Heaven, bestow?
The power, from Grief, Scorn, Malice, to
appeal,

And lose, in dreams of bliss, Revenge's blow?—
No fears then, Poverty, can'st thou inspire,
Give but the vigorous head, the soul entire!

In these solitary wanderings, he fortified his mind with such a conviction of the superiority of intellectual endowments above all worldly advantages, that he felt a dignity and consolation under any mortifications and difficulties, which it was not easy to shake. Yet, when he entered the house, and found it was impossible to alter the opinions of his father, his fortitude and his conviction could not always support him; because, whilst those opinions remained, his fa-

ther's happiness depended upon some conformity to them ; and to that happiness he could not be indifferent. For, it is a melancholy reflection, that, after we have purified our sentiments, and exalted our minds above ordinary passions, we are often debarred of the content and happiness, which ought to be our reward, by a want of similar refinement in those with whom it is our lot to be nearly connected, and whose peace and enjoyments are almost as necessary to us as our own.

“ My dear son,” said his father, “ you
“ may rely upon it, these notions of
“ yours are carried too far. The advantages of wealth, every where, but
“ particularly in this country, are incalculable. The antiquity, or the lustre
“ of

“ of your family, will not outweigh the
 “ difference of a paltry 100*l.* a year in a
 “ neighbour, who but yesterday bought
 “ the estate he lives upon, and ten years
 “ ago was a shoe-black. Your abilities,
 “ or your knowledge, will be of still less
 “ estimation ; or, what is yet worse, will
 “ be reckoned against you ; and a stupid
 “ fellow, who excites nobody’s envy, be-
 “ cause all feel him their inferior in in-
 “ tellect, will be welcome, nay, courted
 “ and praised, where you are neglected
 “ and shunned. Your eccentricities
 “ will be watched, exaggerated, and
 “ ridiculed ; your reserve will be attri-
 “ buted to pride, for which you will
 “ not be allowed to have any tolerable
 “ foundation ; your ancestry, of which
 “ you have some fair ground to be vain,

“ will be misrepresented, turned into
“ some foolish contemptible jest, and
“ even denied; the remnant of your
“ fortunes will be treated with insult;
“ your incumbrances aggravated; and
“ your ruin anticipated, with a hellish
“ delight. If you ever make a false
“ step (and who, my dear son, can hope
“ to walk through life without a devia-
“ tion?) it will be pursued with a ma-
“ lignity, of which you can at present
“ have no conception.—Wretches, de-
“ based by a whole life of depravity,
“ without a single merit to counterba-
“ lance it, will grow consequential, wrap
“ themselves up in their own virtue, and,
“ passing by you with insult, will bless
“ themselves that they are not such as
“ you are.—Even our neighbour, Mr.
“ Squeaker,

“ Squeaker, that strange mixture of a
“ parrot and a baboon, with his shreds
“ of Greek, and Latin, and French, and
“ Italian, with his wretched avarice,
“ and mean ostentation; even he will
“ dare to give himself airs to you;
“ shrug his shoulders, and pass you by
“ as if he had never known you.—Your
“ friend Mr. Cherry himself, of whose
“ heart you have trusted so much to the
“ integrity, even he will listen to the
“ tales of your enemies, and fly with
“ your ‘summer friends.’—Your rela-
“ tions, your near relations, who were
“ wont to pay a deference to your sen-
“ timents, and be vain of your autho-
“ rity, will, as soon as they believe you
“ poor, turn their eyes from you with
“ indifference, or contempt, and think

“the meanest mixture of scoundrelism
“and folly, whose purse is better filled
“than yours, to be more acceptable to
“their table, and their house.”

“You paint, sir,” replied Arthur,
“the advantages of wealth, and the evils
“of poverty, in very strong, and, I be-
“lieve, just colours; but there are other
“evils yet more dreadful than those of
“poverty; and they who have only the
“choice of the two, must bear the less,
“with a fortitude which may soften,
“and perhaps overcome them.”

“O Arthur,” quickly answered his
father, “contempt, neglect, and seclu-
“sion, you have not yet experienced.—

“They are more galling than your spirit
“imagines.

“ imagines. To be conscious, as you
“ must be, of so many superior endow-
“ ments, which the history of mankind
“ has always taught us to be highly
“ estimable ; and yet, to find yourself
“ insulted, and treated with haughti-
“ ness, by the most despicable, the
“ most insipid, the very basest dregs of
“ society ! if you can brook this, you
“ are almost above humanity ! But if,
“ when riches are thrown in your way,
“ all these motives are insufficient to in-
“ duce you to embrace the opportunity,
“ think, my dear son, of me ; think of
“ your family ; think of this hereditary
“ mansion, which has survived so many
“ shocks, and been preserved at so many
“ sacrifices of your ancestors ! Do you
“ alone regard yourself of all this illus-
H 6 “ trious

“trious race, and forego nothing for
“that posterity, for which the regard of
“your forefathers has placed your birth
“in this beloved spot!”

“I would to Heaven, sir,” replied he,
mournfully, “that that birth had never
“been! It surely was attended with
“gloomy omens of misfortune and de-
“spair! But, if the neglect of the
“world were all I had to contend with,
“my resolution, I am sure, would en-
“dure it patiently; and perhaps my
“calmness and my smiles would turn
“the sting of my persecutors on them-
“selves. — Alas! I have misfortunes
“more acute to bear! the difference of
“your opinions; your entreaties; and
“your sorrows!”

“My

“My sorrows, Arthur, are for you!”
he cried. “The sanguine fancy of
“youth paints the prospect of your en-
“joyments in fairy colours, which will
“fade as you go forward, and leave you
“no pleasures sufficiently strong to
“counterbalance the evils with which
“you will be surrounded and oppressed.
“You will then, too late, remember my
“advice; and find what you now believe
“to be the voice of crabbed age, is
“Truth, discovered by Experience.”

Arthur, awed by respect and love, and
overwhelmed by the perplexity of his
own feelings, found himself incapable
of continuing the conversation; and,
wiping off a tear which he could not
suppress, turned his face to the window,
and,

and, with his eyes fixed there, sat for some time almost motionless. As soon as he could, he escaped from the room, and, with his head and his heart full of what had passed, his resolution began to waver, though his sentiments were not altered.

He seized his hat, and took a ramble in the air, to compose the perturbations of his mind. He sallied forward with hasty steps, opposing his breast to the wind, which he thought blew spirits and fortitude upon him. But his ideas were still perplexed; and the enjoyment of the scenery, which he loved, rendered still more dreadful the thought of any misfortunes which would deprive him of it.

“What,”

“ What,” he thought, “ have been
“ my crimes to be thus peculiarly mark-
“ ed out for a misfortune, from which at
“ least twenty generations of my ancestors
“ have escaped ; and which, had it hap-
“ pened to any one of them, would proba-
“ bly have not affected him in the tenth
“ degree it does me. They have all
“ been able to retain this estate : yet is
“ there one, whom the loss of it would
“ have grieved as it would me ? I have
“ often reflected with astonishment, that
“ through all the accidents of time ; in
“ the storms of civil war ; and through
“ the chances of private imprudence,
“ or ill-luck, mine, or any other family,
“ should, in their adherence to the same
“ spot, survive the shock of several cen-
“ turies ! But it drives me almost to
“ distraction,

“ distraction, that that good fortune
“ which has fallen on so many should
“ fly from me alone! My beloved
“ Dallington! perhaps I might yet re-
“ tain you—but at what a price! Can
“ I prostitute my person, and my affec-
“ tions, and perjure myself at the holy
“ altar! Ye dear undebaſed roofs, I
“ ſhould then ſleep under you no longer
“ with pleaſure! Ye ſcenes of rural
“ purity, I ſhould hate you, for the
“ reproaches you would awaken in my
“ mind! In the luxury of riches I
“ might torpify the reproaches of my
“ ſoul by a dull ſenſual kind of pleaſure;
“ but the torpor would not withſtand
“ the impulſes of the imagery of Na-
“ ture! and I ſhould then fly you, like
“ a ſcorpion, becauſe you ſharpened my
“ ſenſibility

“ sensibility only to feel the chains from
“ which I could not escape !”

He threw himself down on a bench ;
and seemed lost in the distraction of his
thoughts. The wind blew, and shook
the boughs of the trees violently over his
head ; and scattered the leaves about
him ; the clouds gathered with an awe-
ful gloom over him ; and evening hast-
ened rapidly on. He seemed a long
while lost in a dream ;—he started, and
looked to the distant, and indistinct gate
of the Park ; he thought he saw a crowd
of figures entering it.—“ Hark !” he
exclaimed :

“ O hark ! See Ruin enters ! By his side,
“ O view the gaunt relentless fiends that ride !

“ See

" See Peculation, and Perverted Law,
" And bloated Wealth, whom hounds of Murder
draw ;

" Extortion, mounted on the pamper'd steed,
" Which the last tears of starv'd Misfortune feed ;
" And black Malignity, all drest in smiles ;
" And Avarice, striving to conceal his wiles :
" And yet an hundred harden'd imps behind,
" That feast upon the sorrows of Mankind !
" Hark, they approach !—Ye fiends of Hell,
away !—

" Dear native fields, ye must not be their prey !
" Shades of my fathers, which the circling Sun,
" As twice three centuries his course he run,
" Has seen, in safety, o'er the faithful head
" Of the same race, your antient umbrage spread !
" Shall cruel hands pollute your dark retreats ?
" Shall Infamy defile your sacred seats ?
" Ye lawns, on which my happy childhood
play'd ;
" Ye paths, where first my infant footsteps stray'd ;

" Ye

" Ye boughs, which first I twisted into bowers ;

" Ye primrose banks, where first I pick'd your
flowers ;

" Your long-lov'd charms shall foreign masters
own ?

" Shall foreign ears insult your slighted moan ?

" Along your silent copses, and your dells,

" Shall puff'd-up Folly shake her cap of bells ?

" In name of Taste direct the axe's blow ?

" Laugh at your shrieks, and lay your glories low ?

" Ye towers, that long have rais'd your heads
sublime,

" Firm and unshaken, 'mid the storms of Time !

" Ye halls, that oft with echoing sounds have rung,

" When the rude minstrels tales of heroes sung ;

" When Feast, and Hospitality, and roar

" Of Mirth went round, the genial goblet o'er ;

" Where still the blazing hearth, at Christmas-tide,

" The frost and snow, and wind and rain, defy'd ;

" And Ease at loaded boards, the village crew,

" Still to their lord in closer union drew !

" Ye

“ Ye rooms, where poets nurs’d their golden
dreams ;
“ Where statesmen fram’d their country’s glorious
schemes ;
“ Where wits their brilliant rays were wont to
dart ;
“ And Beauty’s radiant forms to melt the heart !
“ Shall the coarse upstart wretch, who never knew
“ A thought beyond the figur’d spells, that drew
“ The needy to Destruction’s net, display,
“ Within your sacred walls, a scoundrel’s prey ;
“ New sentiments ; new modes of life unfold,
“ Corrupt with luxury, and blast with gold !—
“ Great God of Mercy ! since it is a crime,
“ To end this wretched life before its time ;
“ If the dire fiends at yonder gate I view,
“ Be not mad Fancy’s forms, but shapes too true,
“ O now direct the pitying dart of Death,
“ And in my native forests close my breath !”

Such is the predominance of imagination in a poetical mind ! It is often like
a tem-

a temporary madness! He saw the dæmons of destruction already in the act of seizing upon the seat of his ancestors.—But at length, rousing himself, he walked gently home, and gradually composed his spirits.

He found his father exhausted with the exertion of a conversation, of which the subject pressed deeply on his heart; and at times alarmingly ill. The silent, unobtrusive attentions of his mother were in vain directed to revive, or soothe him.

The intervention of a sleepless and miserable night did not bring a morning of much comfort to Arthur.—His father was worse; his mother had lost her calmness. His uneasiness and his sorrows were now truly bitter. A
gloom

gloom overspread the house; the very servants caught the infection. He sat in the dark old eating-room, wainscotted with oak; and, having piled up a blazing fire of wood on the hearth, leaned his burning forehead against the heavy projecting sculptures of the chimney-piece, and sat with half-shut eyes lost in his musing. A loud knock at the door roused him; followed by the sound of a female voice, which in a shrill tone demanded entrance of the servant with such a talkative vociferation, that in his confusion she had already got her hand upon the parlour-door, and half opened it before he could collect courage positively to enforce his denial. It was Mrs. Bracey, who, on the sight of Arthur, flew forward, laughing at the success of her own forwardness;

forwardness ; and followed by Miss St. Leger, who entered with trembling steps, and in much distress. Nothing could be more unwelcome than Mrs. Bracey's visit at this time ; whose intrusion not even Miss St. Leger's presence could counterbalance ; and to whose volubility some moments elapsed before he could recover his confusion sufficiently to make any answer. But a wild look, and his eyes swollen with tears, seemed to fix Miss St. Leger's observation : and at those intervals, when she could interpose her voice between the fluent harangues of her companion, she put a few slight questions, in a soft, tremulous manner, to him, which yet so entirely withdrew from him the possibility of listening to Mrs. Bracey, that the latter
began

began to be offended, till, by some means, the image of Miss Pickman recurred to her.

His colour began now to revive; his eyes to lighten; and an energetic interesting manner to mark his conversation. He seemed to sink again sometimes for a moment or two; and to turn pale; and a sigh appeared to escape him; but, as he fixed his looks on Miss St. Leger, he in an instant recovered himself. She displayed that morning beauty beyond what she had ever shewn before: the air had given a glow to her complexion; and a very rapid succession of passions gave her countenance a variety of tender and interesting expressions, which rivetted his notice. Her silky auburn hair,

her

her white hands, her graceful person, round though slight, enchanted him: and his attentions became so very particular and decisive, for the first time, that she at length began to feel some doubts and distresses; though she could not altogether conceal from herself the pleasure she received.

On such a day, when overwhelmed with domestic sorrows, and life seemed to exhibit to him the most gloomy prospects, it may be deemed strange that his heart should feel any vacancy for love. But, perhaps, it is by the excess of grief that it is most softened and prepared for the tenderest of the human passions. Whether it felt an increase from difficulties, or whatever was the cause, it is

VOL. I. I certain

certain that it now raged in the breast of Fitz-Albini with an impetuous flame. The anxious, yet delicate enquiries of Miss St. Leger, regarding the dispute with Colonel Fordingbridge, which had been terminated by a friend to both, with mutual satisfaction, and which had been driven from his mind by subjects so much more interesting to him, now revived the impression of her delightful disposition, while it gave him an opportunity of removing a very heavy anxiety from her mind, very differently constructed from that of Mrs. Bracey, which was mortified at losing the bustle such an event would create in the house, and the paragraphs it would cause in the newspapers.

Fitz-Albini seemed a little to sink in the esteem of Mrs. Bracey from the moment

ment he ceased to be the hero of a duel. And perhaps she was vexed, that the pains she had taken to inflame the anger of Colonel Fordingbridge had been fruitless. Yet this vexation, which sufficiently betrayed itself in her countenance, and in two or three sharp and aggravating remarks, gave no pain to Fitz-Albini, while he contemplated the heavenly temper and softness of her companion. He gazed upon her in enchantment, and now dreaded, for the first time, the summons of the carriage, which was to rid him of Mrs. Bracey's company, since she carried with her a treasure whom he found it misery to lose.

"My dear Jane!" said this amiable woman, as soon as the carriage began to

move from the door, "what is come to
"Fitz-Albini? Did you ever see a
"man so altered? Why, he has grown
"quite a fright! Did you ever see
"such a moping, disagreeable wretch
"as he was to day?"—

Jane coloured, and sat silent.—

"I declare, he looked quite ugly!
"His eyes red; his voice indistinct;
"his hair dishevelled! I believe he
"was drunk, or mad!"—

"Surely, surely, not," replied Jane,
shocked, and indignant, yet in an em-
barrassed voice,—
"recollect, his father
"is very ill!"—

"Father

“ Father ill, indeed !” she answered, with a shrill and sharp contempt :
 “ Well—what if he is ill !—what if
 “ the old don pops off—why, won’t it
 “ be the better for him ?”—

“ But affection, Mrs. Bracey !”—

“ Affection indeed ! whom for ?
 “ what, an old surly old-fashioned
 “ square-toes ! No, no—let him pop
 “ off, I say, ’tis time—pop off !” in
 an hysteric laugh.—

Such were the tender, elegant, and wise sentiments of the fascinating and amiable Mrs. Bracey. Nor did her expressions of resentment of Fitz-Albini end here. She continued the conversa-

tion, and entertained poor Miss St. Ledger with her anger till the latter could not suppress her tears ; tears which were yet mixed with a thousand sweet sensations, that gave a luxury to her sorrows.

After their departure, Fitz-Albini was for a few moments lost in the visions of his fancy, which took a tincture from the impressions of his heart. But a summons to his father's sick chamber soon recalled his reason, and revived his grief.—His father seized his hand; and, while he clasped it, with an agonized affection, he cried—“ Arthur, you see me very ill ! very ill
“ indeed ! I believe myself near my
“ end ! Death will to me but close
“ many years of increasing solicitude
“ and

“and sorrow! cares, which have been
 “the more bitter, because I have kept
 “them to myself. My concealment
 “may have been ill-judged: I now too
 “much fear it has been so: but it arose
 “from the kindest motives.”—He was
 exhausted, and paused:—“the cold
 “chilling damps of dissolution are up-
 “on me—my death will discover too
 “much to you:—if it be possible,
 “retain Dallington,—and do not curse
 “the memory of your father!”—He
 sunk on his pillow, and fainted.—The
 attendants were ready—and Arthur,
 overcome with grief, retired to compose
 his convulsed spirits.

He sobbed—he sunk into a stupor—
 he revived—“*Retain Dallington, and*

“do not curse the memory of thy Father!” vibrated on his ears; sounds the most heart-breaking; the most coincident with all his former apprehensions.— For two days he rambled about the house, with wild looks, and distracted thoughts. No other image but Despair presented itself to his mind. Sleep fled his eyelids at night; and the fever of his brain was indescribably horrible.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the mean time, Fitz-Albini's father appeared somewhat to recover the powers of life ; in consequence of which his son's uneasiness began a little to abate. Arthur sought to bathe his burning temples in the freshness of the autumnal air. A softened splendour invested the skies : a pure, and rather cold, wind stripped the trees rapidly of their leaves, which lay scattered every where upon the grass. He felt his nerves in some degree braced ; and the beauty of the scenery obtruded for a moment some

images of pleasure on his mind. But grief lay with too heavy a load at his heart, not soon to press away all other sensations, whose strength had for a little while roused them under it. But the figure and the voice of Miss St. Leger, such as she appeared the last time he saw her, now recalled itself to his ideas, and, while it added to the tenderness, embittered the agonies, of his sorrow.

Under grief so complicated, no wonder if the dæmons of despair sometimes whispered to him the most horrible deeds! The fiends would sometimes lead him to the banks of rivers; and sometimes to the abrupt and precipitous heights of the Park.—But the recollection of his father, and his mother—his
fears

fears of the future—the precepts of his religion, recalled his senses.—His big and impetuous heart dissolved into tears—he hurried away from the temptations of solitude to the protection of the house, and the sight of the old servants, that loved and adored him. He dared not shew his wild and disordered looks to his fond parents.

He could yet, at times, forget his sufferings, in an eager attention to his books. He seized some mighty poet, or deep historian, and lost himself for hours in abstracted reflections. His soul freed itself from the narrow confines of its situation, and enjoyed a largeness of space adapted to its powers. He saw not, he heard not, the petty wrongs and

passions of the petty people, with whom he had too often been forced into an intercourse. While thus occupied, his spirits revived, his colour returned, and his countenance became relumed.

But that which was almost the only recreation of his disturbed mind, was believed, by the ignorance of the servants, to be the cause of its disease. They attributed to his addiction to study that violent abstraction and derangement, which they observed with the acutest pain; and therefore frequently broke in upon his attention with a tender officiousness, which, though he could not be angry at it, he sometimes regretted. Yet it was very provoking often to have an airy castle, which his
fancy

fancy had been building in a thousand radiant colours, kicked down in a moment, and the whole charm dissolved, by a coarse and ignorant question, however kind was the intention of it; at a time too, when to be awakened from the vision was to be awakened to inexpressible misery.

Under these delusions he was often heard to mutter to himself; and it was thus that his sentiments sometimes cloathed themselves extemporarily in unsought poetry, as the image of Miss St. Leger presented itself to his fancy :

I.

Thy form revives me, lovely maid;
Thine image glances cross the shade;

And

And shews a gleam of joy !
 Perchance the clouds, that gather round,
 May not o'erhang the distant ground,
 Nor distant hopes destroy :
 Perchance the ray that breaks
 From thy enchanting mien a happier omen speaks.

II.

O days of soft delight,
 Too little priz'd, when in thy fight,
 At Orleton's festive dome,
 I pass'd the dove-wing'd hours, and view'd
 The beauties, on which now I brood,
 As through these shades I roam !
 O days, that come no more ;
 How fondly I regret your pleasures now they're
 o'er !

III.

O stay, sweet form ;
 My chilling prospects warm ;

Nor

Nor leave me thus a prey to dreary Woe!

O stay, sweet Form, and calm

My beating breast, and pour a balm

Upon these wounds, no other cure can know!—

—Alas! the vision flies;

And leaves me in despair to breathe my lonely
sighs.

But who can describe the eccentricities of a poet under the influence of grief and love? Wan and drooping, “crazed with care,” and “muttering his wayward fancies,” now slow, now rapid in his motions, to the vulgar he has always the appearance of insanity. His impetuous steps, his loud sighs, were generally heard with fear, and watched with anxiety, by the domesticks. He sometimes crossed the gardener, or burst upon the park-keeper, so frequently in the

most solitary rambles of the park, that at last he began to suspect some inscrutable design. He spoke harshly to them, which was so contrary to his usual manner, that, when he came to reflect upon it, the greatest pain it caused was to himself.

Yet the evil did not cease here. The conduct which appeared to be designed, but inscrutable, to Fitz-Albini, was of easier interpretation to those gossiping villagers, whose vacant curiosity is ever alive, and malignant, though stupid, invention always active. The park-keeper, a favourite of his master, who had long enjoyed a comfortable place, and many indulgences, which, while they enabled him to bring up a large family
in

in industrious comfort, had excited the envy of his neighbours, had a daughter on the verge of seventeen, of a pretty, simple countenance, and modest, quiet, unassuming manners. This girl, who frequently was passing from the lodge, in which her father resided, in a distant part of the park, to the "*great house*" (as the common people call it), for some of those little articles of milk or garden-stuff which are accustomed to be allowed to such a family, was often crossed by Fitz-Albini in his lonely walks, but sometimes, in his fits of abstraction, unseen, and never with any other than the common notice to a distant curtesy.

But the rural neighbours chose to think, or to tell otherwise. They had
marked

marked the park-keeper "*dog*" (as they termed it) "*the young squire.*" And they were not slow in finding a reason for it. Many days had not passed, before it was confidently reported over the village, that Fitz-Albini had had a base design upon the virtue of the keeper's daughter, which had been the real motive of his secret wanderings; that he had already been too successful; and that the father was watching to detect him, not that he might save the innocence of his injured child, but that he might extort money from the cruel offender.

This diabolical scandal first opened itself in whispers, with shrugs, and expressions of sorrow; but shortly became more open, spread wider, with a thousand
sand

land circumstances of exaggeration ; and in less than a week was not only in the kitchens and servants' halls, but also in the dining-rooms and drawing-rooms of every house in the neighbourhood, and even county.

The girls, whom Fitz-Albini's neglect or character had offended, giggled, and rejoiced. The country-squires, the parsons, and the East-Indians, in various ways expressed their triumph.—But by far the most malignant were the old women of all descriptions ; yet more particularly those who had been disappointed in their own views of a marriage between Fitz-Albini and their own daughters.

That

That they, whose sluggish understandings are incapable of any other exertion, should yet always be ready at the invention or improvement of a falsehood, by which the character of a neighbour is aspersed, may seem strange to the candid and philanthropic ; but, strange as it may appear, all the acute observers of human nature must confess it to be too true. Nor will it seem less strange to the superficial, that it is with more peculiar virulence that the blast of Calumny attacks those, whose intellectual accomplishments, and innocent, and even praise-worthy, habits of life ought to protect them by awe and reverence.

Poor Fitz-Albini ! No sooner was thy name whispered by the breath of
Defamation,

Defamation, than all the hounds of Envy
and Malice opened in full cry upon thee!
Folly founded her horn in triumph, and
re-doubled the echoes of their tongues;
and Rêvenge waved her cap, and pointed
the unerring track to their devoted prey!

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

THE tale was not long ere it reached the house of Sir James Pickman. On the father, coarse, gross, and without any of the finer sensations of morality, it made no other impression, than a fear of the pecuniary embarrassments in which such habits might hereafter involve his future son-in-law. The ears of the daughter it did not immediately reach; till, by some slight hints of her waiting-maid, and till, by some *prettily-feigned* exclamations of mixed pity and anger at “poor Mr. Fitz-Albini,” her awakened

awakened curiosity easily drew forth the whole of the wonderful story. It would not be difficult to report the entertaining dialogue, by which the affecting tale was developed: but, as I have no talent for repeating the eloquent conversations of vulgar people, I shall leave it to the reader's imagination.

Miss Pickman burst into a flood of tears, and called down a thousand curses on the faithless and perjured libertine. For half an hour she refused all consolation; neither the cold water nor the hartshorn could allay her hysteric convulsions; nor could the soothing expressions of the assiduous *Maddison* *

* The name of her own maid.

soften

soften the distraction of her thoughts. It did so happen, however, that one of the volumes of "Clarissa Harlowe" lay on the table; and she was so lucky as to open upon a part, where the pleasing powers of a profligate, in the character of Lovelace, are made the most attractive. In this hero she soon discovered the archetype of her lover; and, pitying his irregularities, adored him, with all his wickedness. Maddison put her in mind, that "rakes make the best husbands;" and she only longed for an opportunity to shew at once her forgiveness and affection.

It cannot be supposed that the story lost any time in travelling to Orleton. For three days it afforded Mrs. Bracey

so much pleasure and employment, that it had actually recovered her from a most severe fit of ill-humour, by which the whole house had not only been tormented, but put into an uproar. The first person to whom she told it was Miss St. Leger, into whose room she came, breathless with eagerness, to disclose it, with a thousand exaggerations. She then found some occasion to relate it to every female servant in the house separately, a little varied or embellished at each relation; and, before the male attendants, it was the constant theme of her conversation, both at dinner and at supper.

Let not this surprize the reader, who recollects her partiality for Fitz-Albini. The kind of partiality she entertained

for him was not lessened by this tale. Perhaps it was increased. Nor was it improbable, that the next opportunity his attentions would be still more the object of her pursuit than before. For, totally without a heart, and totally without those principles which the understanding sometimes furnishes as a substitute for its directing influence, of the man for whom she indulged a preference, she could think the worst, without diminishing her admiration, and speak the worst, without diminishing her pursuit.

On Jane St. Leger the effect was widely different. Her grief was great; her anger was yet greater than her grief. But she exerted all her fortitude to conceal

ceal her emotions, at least till Mrs. Bracey left the room : and, as that lady was not eminent for her knowledge of the genuine and natural workings of the human heart, those of Jane St. Leger, violent as they were on the present occasion, passed unnoticed by her.

To Jane it caused an indescribable gloom and depression. A cloud seemed at once to spread over every object in the landscape of life. The sun appeared to be blotted out of the skies ; the brilliant colours of the prospect to fade ; and every thing to wear a dull, blank, uninteresting hue. The world seemed peopled with dæmons ; and that which wore the fairest shape was the most mischievous. She lamented her existence ;

and rued the day that she was born.

“ My beloved mother ! my tender, yet
“ imprudent father ! ” she exclaimed to
herself, “ look down, if it be permit-
“ ted, from your abodes above, and pi-
“ ty, comfort, and direct, your unhappy
“ daughter ! See her alone, and help-
“ less, struggling amidst vice and folly ;
“ insulted by those who ought to protect
“ her ; and beset by Profligacy, under
“ the attractive shapes of Virtue and
“ Genius ! All before her is Darkness
“ and Despair ! Dependence without
“ hope ! Vice left to range unencoun-
“ tered ! Religion itself seems too
“ weak to penetrate the gloom before
“ her ! Oh, fortify her heart ! illumine
“ her mind ! ” A tremor came over
her ; her eyes grew dim ; she sunk in-
sensible

fenfible upon the bed. When ſhe recovered, the impreſſion of a viſion remained ſo ſtrong upon her, that ſhe found it very difficult to doubt its reality. She thought, while ſhe was lamenting her fate, there appeared to her the figure of a beautiful female, all pale and diſhevelled, who reproached her for her tears, and cried, “ Why weep you ; you are
“ innocent ; you are ſpotleſs ! So was I
“ once ! See me now in torments ;
“ while thou ſhalt bathe in bliſs !
“ Now,” at which the figure was inſtantly transformed into an emaciated corpe, “ now my ſufferings return,
“ and will for ever be repeated, till the
“ wretch, the cauſe of all my ſufferings,
“ whom yet I love, ſhall waſh out his
“ ſin, and clear that mind, which was

“ once the residence of purity, from the
“ blot of sensual pleasures ! Oh, my
“ tortures increase ! Warn him, thou
“ yet untainted Being, warn him ! I
“ already see him tottering within the
“ grasp of the watchful fiend of Hell !
“ They seize ———.” She screamed—
the horrors of the voice were in her ear ;
and she waked with the convulsion of
her terrors. She knew not where she
was ; her ideas were wild ; her whole
frame was exhausted ; but her thoughts
soon fixed upon Fitz-Albini.

She reflected deeply upon his character ; she began now to feel pity, mixed with her indignation ; and her mind became occupied in devising means of admonition, which the delicacy of her situation,

tion, and a thousand complicated feelings, sentiments, and principles, continually thwarted:

In the mean time, the subject every day got stronger hold of her thoughts. Her countenance, her voice, her pale cheeks, betrayed it. Again the whole scenery of life became arrayed in new hues. A tender pensive pleasing kind of melancholy tinted the charms of nature. Past events of her life, which had gone by little noticed at the time, started up in her mind in new and lively colours. Her habits of thinking, and rules of appreciating the circumstances of the world, became totally altered. Cheerfulness not only deserted herself, but was unpleasing to her in others. She always

loved solitude ; but it now had a new character, and new charms for her ; the light in which she before would have arrayed it was gay ; its shades could not now be too deep, or too gloomy.

The season of the year was congenial to the state of her mind. Autumn has always been considered as propitious to Melancholy.

“ ——— In every breeze the power

“ Of philosophic Melancholy comes *.”

Nor is it suited to philosophic melancholy alone. It is peculiarly grateful to that melancholy which arises from a softened and agitated heart. Dim-faded

* Thomson's Autumn.

woods,

woods, gentle funs, or dark fogs, and a general appearance of decay in the face of Nature, coincided with the frame of mind, and the feelings, of Miss St. Ledger. She wandered out by herself for hours together. She climbed the neighbouring hills; and beheld, with inexpressible delight, the mixture of land and sea around her, which forms the most picturesque and beautiful of all prospects. The green undulating hills fed by sheep, or covered with dusky wood; the brown stubbles in the valleys; the bold projecting cliff, crowned by some rude antique castle; and the blue sea spreading its broad expanse, dotted with sails, in the opening of the bay; while some quiet village, with its humble church, scattered upon the hills, or among the valleys,

K 5

leys, varied the calm and solitary features of the view, and soothed her heart and her imagination. She often stood, like a statue on the heights, gazing around her, while the temperate air braced her frame, and refreshed her spirits. She saw far around ; and, beneath her, the labourer and woodman at work in the fields, and the copses ; and watched the progress of the plough along the slopes, or in the bottoms, where the dark up-turned soil gave a new tint to the landscape. Such were her rambles on those glorious days of mild sun-shine at this beautiful period of the year, which Thomson so incomparably describes, when,

The lengthen'd night elaps'd, the Morning
shines

“ Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,

“ Unfolding

“ Unfolding fair the last Autumnal day.
“ And now the melting Sun dispels the fog;
“ The rigid hoar-frost melts before his beam;
“ And, hung on every spray, on every blade
“ Of grass, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round*.”

But it was not in these bright days alone that she loved this scenery. When the Heavens scowled, and a moist chilly air portended rain, she sallied forth to her accustomed haunts; and was charmed to observe the drizzling shower come on, and the scarce-penetrable fog fill the valley, gather round the hills, and almost obscure the castle, while here and there an object broke through the mist; till presently the Sun again peeped dimly through the haziness, and created a picture of indescribable beauty.

* Autumn, v. 1163—1169.*

I may well say, *indescribable*; for, where are the talents that can describe the charms of Nature with sufficient force?

“O for the fire and voice of Seraphim,

“To sing her glories with devotion due*!”

Ye who live in cities, and are pleased with no views but of the dull works of man, what aliens are ye to genuine delight! How little conception can ye have of the varied grandeur of that Creation amid which ye are placed! Ye may practise some dull grovelling virtues; but surely your hearts can never have expanded with those overflowings of gratitude and admiration, which elevate us

* Beattie's Minstrel, I. A. XL.

to the dignity of which our nature is capable!

Yet not they alone, who are immured in cities, are thus insensible to the scenery of Nature. There are beings so brutal, as to pass their days in the midst of it, yet to be untouched by its beauties. With what scorn, disgust, and horror, was Miss St. Leger obliged to chill and repress all the pure and heavenly sentiments and images with which her whole frame was thrilling from her walk, when on her return she met Mrs. Bracey. On this woman the striking features of Nature made not even a faint, a momentary impression. She lived amidst fields, without even having enriched her mind with the acquisition of a single rural image.

image. Something very gross, or very absurd, in the course of artificial society, was alone capable of giving even a feeble impulse to her slender faculties. Whence she sprang I know not: but this I know, that she was bred in the hot-bed of Vice, in the hurry and impurity of an overgrown metropolis, amidst the corrupting luxury of riches, ill and suddenly got; and among connections whose sentiments were all wrong, whose heads were all turned, and manners were a disgusting mixture of vulgarity and affected polish, from the suddenness of their unexpected elevation above the order they had all so lately held in society. That Mr. Bracey should have selected this lady for his wife, though she might have seen more company, and been instructed in
more

more of what are called accomplishments, than the daughters of his neighbours the country-gentlemen, may be, too late, a cause of repentance to him. He has probably discovered, before this time, that what he and too many others deemed the prejudices of narrow minds were founded in the deepest experience, and deepest insight into the characters and constitution of human nature; that the confusion of ranks and conditions in matrimony is almost always productive of misery; and that all the habits of thinking, courses of life, and, I might almost say, even contexture of body, of those who had lived hereditarily in the country, upon the simple produce of a landed estate, are so diametrically opposite to those of such as have been pampered

2

pered in great towns with the abundance of wealth hastily acquired, that they never can combine into mutual harmony; that their friends and acquaintance never meet each other but to part with equal disgust and abhorrence; and that, if the man, from too yielding a nature, attempts to accommodate, and to graft on the plainness of his character a behaviour, mode of life, and train of thinking, so uncongenial, he makes himself absurd, without obtaining his point; he spends his estate, while he becomes the scorn at once of those whom he has deserted, and those whom he has joined. How far Mr. Bracey has felt these effects, I must leave others to judge. That the restless temper of his wife cannot have suffered her very tamely to submit has, I think,

I think, been too apparent. That the manners of the house at Orleton were now totally different from those of a family, which had been remarkable, as far back as the memory of man, for their simplicity, decency, integrity, and plainness, could not but be notorious to all the neighbours.

Mrs. Bracey received Miss St. Leger from her morning walks sometimes with fretfulness, sometimes with anger, and sometimes with ridicule. While she was stretched at length on a sofa, with scarcely power enough to lift up her head to address her, she cried, in a feeble voice, “What, returned safe—not dying with
“fatigue!—why, you have the strength
“of a ploughman!—Where were you
“born?

“ born ? I, who have been *delicately*
“ bred, should absolutely have died with
“ weariness, before I had reached half
“ the way home from the very shortest
“ of your walks ! But then, to be sure,
“ there is a difference. We, who have
“ had the advantage of large fortunes,
“ have been so indulged !—O how could
“ I, with all my accomplishments, and
“ advantages, and acquaintance, throw
“ myself away upon a brute of a coun-
“ try squire ; to be entertained all the
“ evening with nothing but the atchieve-
“ ments of his beastly hounds, and see
“ nothing all the morning but odious
“ cows and sheep !—And now, madam,
“ let me hear, for I am dying with en-
“ nui, what entertainment you can afford
“ me, after this mighty walk of yours.
“ What

“ What have you seen, or heard ? Have
“ you seen any beaux ? Have you heard
“ any news of the neighbourhood ?
“ Have those disagreeable Pickmans
“ committed any fresh absurdity ? Has
“ Mrs. O’Callaghan made herself more
“ ridiculous to the gentlemen, by telling
“ any new tale of indecency ? Or has
“ Lady B***, in her eagerness to draw
“ out the petty scandal of the neigh-
“ bourhood, given additional traits at
“ once of her delight at defamation,
“ and her illiterate ignorance and folly ?
“ Has Mr. Shipley’s curiosity been pu-
“ nished by any new flight of quails
“ from the closet he was requested not
“ to open ? Or has Mr. Squeaker again
“ ordered the tails of his neighbour’s
“ hounds to be docked off, which, by
“ passing

“passing through his garden in the
“chace, did him a farthing’s worth of
“damage? Oh! tell me instantly! in-
“vent, if you do not know; for, I
“am only kept alive in this detestable
“solitude by scandal!”

“Dear Mrs. Bracey,” replied Miss St.
Leger, “what news, what scandal, can
“I have learned in the solitary fields?
“What beaux can I have seen? You
“know that I find the air refreshing to
“my health; and that it is a sufficient
“recompense, without hearing news,
“or meeting beaux.”—“Well, for my
“part,” answered the lady, “you wo-
“men, who are bred in the country,
“seem to be so unconquerably stupid,
“as to be content to vegetate with the
“plants,

“plants, among which ye live. We
“people of better birth, who have been
“educated in the world, require a little
“food for the mind. But, this execra-
“ble place——.” At that instant
the door opened, and Mr. B***, whose
character has already been described in
page 37 of these memoirs, entered the
room. The lady instantly revived from
her sofa; and was all gaiety and spirits.

Mr. B***, a man not much inclined
to gallantry, at least with the upper or-
ders of the sex, received the advances of
Mrs. Bracey with a repulsive kind of
awkwardness, by which, however, she
was not discouraged. She talked on,
till B*** began to be flattered with the
notice, a notice to which he was not
much

much accustomed from ladies, and invited her to see the wonders of his workshop, where his genius shone out in the operations of his hands, and where he had found out a method of making a waggon in a superior style to the carpenter, which would move without horses into the bargain. There was a whim in all this not at all ill-suited to the turn, temper, and views, of Mrs. Bracey. She accepted the invitation with pleasure; and, in return, gratified him with an exaggerated relation of all the vile, improper, false, defamatory, and absurd stories of every one, high and low, which were circulating through the neighbourhood. B***, while he did not want a kind of shrewdness, which impelled him to despise the folly and indelicacy of the

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the relater, yet possessed a malevolence of heart which made him pleased with the relation. But, of all that was repeated, the story of poor Fitz-Albini seemed to fill him with the most diabolical delight, of which he could not suppress the appearance; and his delight was the more keen, because the mortifying tale passed before Miss St. Leger, whose beauty *even he* could not but admire; and whom, because he suspected her partiality for Fitz-Albini, he enjoyed a triumph in thus punishing.

A sly fide-long kind of look, which at all times in a certain degree characterized his countenance, was now directed at this unhappy girl; while Mrs. Bracey continued her exaggerated scandal, which

which was heightened by his sarcasms,
and his pretended pity of poor injured
Miss Pickman. "But," added he,
"perhaps I ought not to say so: to
"be sure, it is no business of mine:
"and I think Fitz-Albini a very good
"sort of a fellow, I am sure: but the
"world you know, Mrs. Bracey, the
"world you know, will have but little
"compassion for these fellows, who are
"set up for geniuses—very pretty, to
"be sure, very pretty, to write verses on
"robin-redbreasts, and so; and I like
"them very much myself: I like them
"very much:" shaking his head (of
which he had a trick when he was
eager): "but then the world says, these
"poets, these tender-hearted gentlemen
"(*I mean no reflections, I am sure*) are
"apt

“ apt to want a little common sense, or
 “ so, and to get into a few scrapes, but
 “ then, I dare say, they mean no harm—
 “ I don’t doubt they feel a great deal—
 “ ready to break their hearts at the death
 “ of a robin-redbreast ; yes—there were
 “ some verses the other day in the news-
 “ paper upon Mrs. P****’s pug-dog
 “ breaking his leg ; very soft, and very
 “ pretty, to be sure : I dare say they
 “ were his : poor fellow—I am sure he
 “ feels very much ; for, notwithstanding
 “ the slip he has made, I think him a
 “ very good fellow, I am sure—I like
 “ him very much !”

Such was the elegant harangue of
 Mr. B***, of which those, to whom
 the mean and shuffling, yet malignant,

tones of his voice, and his cunning oblique looks, cannot be conveyed, will lose almost all the force; yet this is the common opinion, which vulgar minds have formed of poetry—*rhymes upon the deaths of robin-redbreasts, and the broken limbs of pug-dogs*. A relation of the writer of these memoirs, one who had been brought up at a public school *and university*, one who was himself allied to poets, and whose very name ought to have excited in him some love for literature, having seen in a news-paper some of the most execrable namby-pamby lines on a robin which ever disgraced the pages of those diurnal publications, came up to him at a moment he meant to flatter, and told him of the discovery he had made; and how much he admired the
lines,

lines, of which he “instantly recognized
“the manner, so tender, so pretty, that
“they could have been written by no-
“body but the person to whom he was
“addressing his remarks.”—This man
really supposed he was paying a compli-
ment; and such were his ideas of the
highest of all arts, that he wondered why
the person he was attempting to compli-
ment seemed shocked, and turned from
him with disgust. Mr. B***’s senti-
ments of poetry were at least as ignorant
and low. He thought perhaps, like
a famous mathematician at Cambridge,
who, upon Virgil being put into his
hands, and his opinion of that divine
Bard being asked, replied, “he might
“be very well; but, for his part, *he*
“*could find no proof in him.*”

Of all the minds that could ever come into comparison, no two could be more opposite than those of Mr. B*** and Fitz-Albini. The one dry, minute, hard, narrow, selfish, ignorant; the other wide, wild, impetuous, full of sentiment and soul; precise and laborious when the occasion required; but, otherwise, general, comprehensive, flowing with imagery, and excursive: B*** loved nobody; but Fitz-Albini was his aversion.

Mrs. Bracey had a mode of expressing her pleasure at the triumph of malignity, which was peculiarly provoking;—a sort of struggling noise, between an hysseric laugh and an exclamation. Miss St. Leger, who to a gentle disposition added
a lofty

a lofty spirit, felt her whole soul agitated by this abominable conversation. But she resolutely commanded her perturbation from betraying itself in her countenance.

B*** therefore left the house without having the satisfaction of knowing the depth of the wounds he had inflicted; and Miss St. Leger retired, overwhelmed with mortification, to her room. There she gave a full vent to the bitterness of her thoughts. She knew too well the dispositions of those whom she had left, to give full credit to their tales; but, though she despised the relaters, for Fitz-Albini she could find no apology, which set her heart at ease.

The vision or dream which had made such an impression upon her recurred with double force to her mind ; and she felt a perplexity of conscience, from which she knew not how to extricate herself.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

DURING this time, Fitz-Albini little suspected how much he had been the subject of the conversation of the neighbourhood. He had spent his days in solitary wanderings, and his nights in feverish grief. His father's maladies increased; his mother's fortitude forsook her. Yet, even amidst her sorrows, some officious person had carried the wicked tale to her ears, which, however, she rejected with the scorn that became her, and turned her indignation on the tale-bearer.

Yet, as he occasionally traversed the country, with a mind torn by the conflict of a thousand passions, he saw something of neglect, or scorn, in the countenances of those acquaintance whom he accidentally met, which at last excited his wonder. Not conscious of having done any thing to deserve it, he sought in vain within himself for its explanation. To many sorts of affront, which arise from fear, or envy, or hatred, he had been habituated. But there was an implied superiority in those, who at present insulted him, which had a totally different effect. His spirit, or perhaps his pride, could ill brook it, even amidst the oppression of much severer misfortunes. The momentary impulse of his impetuous temper induced him to call for satisfaction

faction from those whose behaviour appeared so unaccountable to him. But his cooler judgement told him, that to take such notice was to confer on the inflictors of his mortification more consequence than they deserved.

Of all whom he met, the countenance and manner of his old friend Mr. Cherry gave him the most acute and unexpected pain. That *he* should have fallen into the concerted schemes, whatever they were, (for, concerted schemes they must have been, since otherwise so many would not have agreed in the same conduct,) excited his surprize, as well as sorrow. Many times did he resolve to call upon him for an explanation; many times did he resolve to requite the wrong

by the revenge which the rules of honour have dictated; but his cooler judgment disapproved of all his resolutions. If his anger was ill-founded, he would have cause indeed to repent the rashness and violence of such steps: if it had too real a cause, the man who could be so mean as to prove, wantonly and without an urgent cause, unfaithful, was by far too despicable for his vengeance.

Not so Mr. B***: the few words of outward friendship he professed had never been believed. But this man, though there was something of the common coldness in his behaviour, yet endeavoured, by fits, to conceal it under the semblance of civility. Fitz-Albini, who knew his character, knew that *he* would rather discover

discover any thing at which he was offended behind his back than to his face. He, therefore, would have been a more proper object of resentment. But Fitz-Albini, humble when not ill treated, and now depressed with grief, was yet, when roused, so properly sensible of his own higher powers, and the dignity of his character, that his maturer sentiments induced him to return the wrongs of Mr. B*** too with silent contempt, rather than dignify him by his notice.

Unhappy at home, affronted abroad, what had Fitz-Albini now to soothe him? How could he keep in good humour with himself? or what were the prospects that could flatter him, when it was too probable that it would soon be

known to the world, that poverty was added to whatever other causes there might be of scorn, and insult? Under subjects of mortification so complicated, what vigour of soul could support him!

The elasticity of a mind, strong by nature, and richly stored, is greater than weak people can imagine. The excess of his oppression called forth new powers: his spirit rose; and a feeling, something like despair, roused fresh animation and activity.

He sallied forth, in a temper gayer than usual, in quest of adventures; to defy malice, and triumph over neglect. A person, powerful and commanding, when animated; a cheerful voice; a bold look;

look ; gave him a superiority, before which his enemies, though prepared to abash him, shrank. As his horse was flying under him across the neighbouring downs, the sight of a large party before him did not at all divert his course. He was soon recognized as he advanced ; and two or three of his most bitter enemies of both sexes, who were among the groupe, prepared themselves to enjoy the pleasure of his humiliation. The whole of them had issued on a morning ramble from Orleton ; and Mrs. Bracey, forgetful of all her scandal, was the first to hail him with pleasure. Miss St. Leger shrank back, alarmed, trembling, half-angry, half-delighted, yet fearful of betraying her feelings, and wishing herself any where but where she was.

Sir

Sir Thomas Bulmer, Mr. Yapton, and Mr. Baugham, Miss Halton, Miss Fleetwood, and Mrs. Dormer, had already composed their countenances to various expressions, becoming their characters; when, as he approached, the liveliness of his manner, and the boldness of his address, disarmed them all. In a cheerful voice he talked with an unusual fluency and energy, till the men who hated him sank into an involuntary silence, and the women listened with an admiration which they could not suppress.

Miss St. Leger alone lingered behind in a conflict of passions which her delicate frame was ill able to support. She sometimes heard him talk with emotions of delight and tenderness; at other moments

ments she contemplated him with horror ; and there were intervals when pity alone predominated in her bosom, and she wished for nothing but the power to save from habitual vice an amiable young man, whom accident alone, she was willing to hope, had seduced into one great crime.

Mrs. Bracey was determined not to lose too quickly the pleasure of his company, while he was in so agreeable a humour, and absolutely compelled him therefore to dine at Orleton. She had no sooner reached the house, than she dispatched a messenger to invite the Pickman family to dinner, that she might
*“ enjoy the fun of the girl's distress and
 “ her airs,”* as she expressed it. The
 Pickman

Pickman family, discovering whom they were to meet, were mean enough to come at so abrupt an invitation.

Miss Pickman entered, decorated with all the advantages that art and expence could give to her person. The soft temper, the kindly affections of Miss St. Leger, could not counteract an emotion of violent hatred, as she sailed up the room in all her diamonds and costly ornaments; and as, while she watched her with solicitude, she saw her turn her enquiring eyes on Fitz-Albini, a cold depressing tremor ran suddenly over all her frame, and centered in her heart, till, as the palpitation increased, she with difficulty kept her seat, or her senses.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bracey, who hated Miss Pickman more for the finery in which she was arrayed, than for any power which she believed in her charms, called in vain upon the exertions of Miss St. Leger. She sat pale, silent, stupid, lost. But the summons to dinner put an end to the extent of these embarrassments; and Mrs. Bracey, as usual, so contrived as to place Fitz-Albini between Miss St. Leger and herself. Fitz-Albini never before appeared to such advantage. The fire of his eyes, the energy of his language, the acuteness of his observations, overpowered malice and prejudice, and extorted involuntary admiration. Miss Pickman listened and languished; and while she noticed the tribute of all ears to him, whom she considered as her destined

destined husband, she felt it to be a gratification of her own vanity, though she could little comprehend the force of his conversation.

Sir James Pickman, while he paid attention to him, was employed in calculating the advantages to which such talents might be turned in public life, and the good bargains that might be made with the minister for himself as well as his future son-in-law. At least *an Irish coronet* seemed already to be within his grasp; and fresh lucrative contracts, to double the superfluous wealth in which he was wallowing. A few sentiments, of no very pliant nature, did indeed escape from Fitz-Albini, not totally unmarked by him; and now and then

then an expression of indignant scorn at the insolence, and, too often, the dishonesty, of new-got riches; but of Sir James, habituated never to let his passions predominate over his interest, a swallow or two soon bore down any rising emotion; which, on recalling to his mind the many emoluments that now seemed to open upon him from the intended match, was succeeded by a forced smile of peculiar complacence, and an appearance of uncommon delight with a man whom his heart, if it ever felt any simple passion, told him to abhor.

A wide and varied conversation was carried on, regarding the circumstances of the country, and the principles of the times; in which, I know not by what felicity,

felicity, Fitz-Albini, taking the lead, fell easily into a long train of opinions happily expressed, without appearing to declaim, or to be tedious. The impatience which fox-hunters, East-Indians, young officers, and country clergymen, generally discover to the discussion of any important subject, did, by some lucky power in his manner or his sense, not once to-day exhibit itself. He lamented boldly the cowardly compromising spirit with which the higher orders degrade the situation in which they have been placed (not, it is true, by their own merits, but) by the wise institutions of regulated society. He despised the fallacious, half-witted arguments, to which many of the apparently well-informed of the aristocratic branches
or

of the state, by giving too much way, ought to have admitted, as a legitimate consequence, that they held their privileges, through the abuse of human rights. He spoke with just anger of the dilemmas in which they were perpetually involving themselves, by a fearful, mean, time-serving, mode of thinking. He laughed at the triumphs with which occasional abuses were held up as incontrovertible proofs of an erroneous system. He could ridicule, or hate, or scorn the man, and yet pay a due deference to the order. A coronet, nay a crown, never dazzled his understanding; though he conceived it added an additional grace to merit.

He

He treated with indignation, as strong as language could paint, that insolent and presumptuous folly which affected to throw by, as an useless incumbrance of prejudice and ignorance, the gradual and accumulated wisdom of every age, from the commencement of the world, and to build a new system upon a set of new-discovered principles, totally original, and from the pure fountain of a philosophic mind. His contempt was too big for utterance, at the wretched, and base blindness of these people, when he observed, that they could so little have invented even the paltry systems of which they boast, without the aid of that wisdom and learning on which they would trample, that a child of ten years old, who has been accustomed to the society
and

and conversation of well-educated and well-informed minds, will often discover more rectitude, more vigour, more comprehension of knowledge, than the greatest abilities could arrive at, by the mere force of their own discoveries in rude and unpolished nations. The few particles that any one mind can add to the heap of wisdom are small indeed. We build step by step upon the works of our predecessors. And how many *data* were already settled, before even the mighty Newton began his wonderful progress in science!

“ Admit for a moment,” said he, “ the
 “ seduction of those wild principles to
 “ influence your mind, you will, upon
 “ taking up all the compositions of for-
 “ mer

“mer genius, all the lives of the great
“men of former days, lose at once all
“the charms and admiration which
“you formerly felt in them: all the
“rules of their conduct, all the guides
“of their sentiments, all the motives of
“their passions, appear so childish and
“ignorant, that they sink into drivellers.
“The acute wisdom of Burleigh, the
“comprehension, the spirit, the bril-
“liance of Raleigh, fade away, and be-
“come a pitiable weakness. The rich
“eloquence of Cicero becomes a flow-
“ery inanity. And the tales of Ho-
“mer, and of Virgil, and the enchant-
“ing characters of Shakespeare, com-
“mand so little of our respect, that
“they lose all interest in the heart, or
“the imagination.”

He

He observed, that it was always a matter of inexplicable astonishment to him, how so foolish a system had ever made such progress as it had. The idea of a system of government, which was to derive its strength and respect from the powers of ratiocination of the governed, is adapted to an order of beings, which can bear little similitude to such as the great Creator has placed here. We are a compound of reason and passion; and perhaps the heart is a less erroneous director of our sentiments and our conduct, than the understanding. If it was not so, it appears as if many parts of the *inspired writings*, and many delineations of character to be found there, would give a weight and colour to a thousand little circumstances which

would be unworthy of a rational creature. So at least, he said, it seemed to him; but he spoke with awe and deference of a subject of which he could not presume to have any confident opinion.

He lamented the too frequent defect of discrimination in minds, which, by an endeavour to emancipate themselves from an unmanly subjection to the dazzle of rank and wealth, are perpetually carried to the contrary extreme, and by the very insolence they discover betray the superiority they strive to conceal. Of all characters, he said, there was a period when he most detested the servile follower of titles, the voluntary appendant to rank and honours. He yet

yet held such an one in strong dislike. But the times had unfortunately brought forth more dangerous monsters of a contrary nature, which, of course, excited his more violent abhorrence; though the two extremes so nearly met that he had often observed the same persons pass from one to the other.

Mr. Baugham, the East-Indian, now remarked, that a person who had been formerly an admirer and defender of the “privileged orders” might at present, without a just reproach of inconsistency, be an enemy to them; for the extreme profusion with which such privileges had lately been conferred, without any tolerable selection, had brought them into very just disrepute. *He knew* “that

“ some very poor people, whose whole
“ income would scarce pay the expences
“ of his *second table*, had arrived even at
“ a peerage, when men of *wealth* and
“ *consideration*” (mark the combination of
words) “ were scarce noticed.”—“ I am
“ no more,” he went on, “ an advocate
“ for the French system, Mr. Fitz-Al-
“ bini, than you are: far—very far
“ from it.—But then a minister must
“ not quite fancy himself in the days of
“ the Plantagenets: a few old-fashioned
“ notions must a little give way, and
“ bend to the times. I am not unac-
“ quainted with our history any more
“ than yourself; though perhaps you
“ imagine I am. The Tudors, at their
“ accession, very wisely broke the chain
“ of the old feudal power of the aristo-
“ cratic

" cratic order. We now live, Mr.
 " Fitz-Albini, in a commercial coun-
 " try and age. Who so enlarged, who
 " so well-informed, who so noble, as
 " the British merchant? Whether we
 " trade to the West; or to the East;
 " whether we direct our counting-houses
 " in London; or command factories
 " abroad; are we not as well employed
 " as my good friend Sir Thomas Bul-
 " mer here (he will excuse me), in ri-
 " ding after his hounds all the morning,
 " and drinking his bottle of port, and
 " falling asleep after it, during the re-
 " mainder of the day?" This produced
 a loud laugh from the company: he
 went on: " Don't you think we deserve
 " a few of these privileges as much as
 " they? Can't we be as useful to th
 M 3 " minister?

“ minister ? Don’t we know as much
“ about the law, and about the taxes,
“ and *all they-there things* ?” Such was
the *elegant* close of Mr. Baugham’s ob-
servations, which, though he did not
want acuteness, were spoken with such
a provincial, barbarous, half-Scotch ac-
cent, as to excite some wonder, where
he could have been born, or received
his early education. It is singular, that
scarce ever any learning, any riches,
any society in future life, eradicate the
traces of the first ten years spent amongst
mean and vulgar people.

“ Perhaps, Mr. Baugham,” replied
Fitz-Albini, “ the minister has been too
“ profuse of his honours. But there
“ are some of your remarks which,
“ though

“ though I differ from you, it will be
 “ difficult for me to answer, because
 “ you have, a little unpolitely, made
 “ the subject approach to what may be
 “ interpreted as personal. This is, as
 “ you say, a commercial country ; pos-
 “ sibly too commercial. Its commerce
 “ is now become necessary, because
 “ without it I fear we never could pay
 “ the interest of the national debt. But
 “ might not that debt have been avoid-
 “ ed if we had not proceeded upon so
 “ commercial a system ? In our insular
 “ situation, would the balance of power
 “ have been in that case of so much
 “ consequence to us ? From excessive
 “ wealth perhaps a country is not in less
 “ danger than from excessive poverty.
 “ It corrupts, it inflames : it in too

“ many respects aggravates the condi-
“ tion of the lower orders, of whom, in
“ every possible government, the major-
“ rity must consist. I fear it always
“ bears about it the seeds of its own
“ dissolution. The wealthy will, as you
“ say, never bear to be beneath the
“ highest consideration : and virtue,
“ wisdom, birth ; the antient gentry of
“ moderate fortunes ; and the humble
“ and honest peasantry, who have paid
“ them an hereditary respect ; will never
“ endure to see persons insulting over
“ them, who are remembered to have
“ been lately in a state of servility to
“ the one order, and of equality to the
“ other. All the philosophical founda-
“ tions of those distinctions, which,
“ when conferred on birth, are so far
“ from

“ from being generally invidious, that
“ they have the most certain tendency
“ to the peace and good order of soci-
“ ety, are abandoned, when titles and
“ privileges are bestowed on newly-ac-
“ quired riches. I know the danger of
“ not gratifying this powerful set of
“ people, who can resort to their coffers
“ laden with the spoils of the East, or
“ who perhaps keep the key of the Na-
“ tional Bank. I know with what an
“ hearty contempt they treat the imbe-
“ cillity of empty descent, or the fanci-
“ ful and shadowy importance of a well-
“ cultivated and brilliant mind. They
“ hold up their rattling purses, and,
“ looking to the neighbouring boroughs,
“ bid defiance to the families, to whom
“ those boroughs have for centuries paid

“ respect, and by whom they have for
“ centuries been fed. They come into
“ counties; spread their tables wide
“ with costly viands, and surround
“ them with gaudy liveries, and, sending
“ out their cards of invitation, laugh to
“ see the plainer hospitality of their
“ neighbours deserted, even where elo-
“ quence, and knowledge, and virtue,
“ and illustrious birth, preside. Riches
“ now carry so much weight, that no-
“ thing of a less substantial nature, no-
“ thing which depends upon what are
“ called *the prejudices of the mind*, can
“ retain the smallest influence against
“ it. In a little while who will retain
“ land, of which the income is so scanty
“ in proportion to the capital, when it
“ gives no more power or respect than
“ the

“ the money which it produces ? when
 “ country-bankers in every town, rising
 “ out of millers and shop-keepers, can
 “ fabricate their paper-money, and, go-
 “ ing to market with it in purchasing
 “ votes to make themselves legislators,
 “ take the House of Commons by storm,
 “ where, selling their voices for shares
 “ of lucrative loans and contracts, they
 “ can turn their paper currency into
 “ solid wealth, with which again they
 “ purchase honours and privileges to
 “ confirm the insolent triumph of their
 “ ill-got superiority ? Does wealth re-
 “ quire these additional appendages in
 “ days like these ? Is it not dangerous
 “ to gratify it ? If it is so gratified
 “ much longer, I do not hesitate to as-
 “ sert, that the death of the constitu-

“ respect, and by whom they have for
 “ centuries been fed. They come into
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 “ them with gaudy liveries, and, sending
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 “ sert, that the death of the constitu-

“tion is not only as certain, but at
 “least as near, as those of the indivi-
 “duals at this moment existing un-
 “der it.”

“Instead of adding to the too in-
 “creasing force of this alarming evil,
 “every thing ought to be done to
 “counteract it. Every privilege, every
 “power to command respect, ought to
 “be given to education, pure and vir-
 “tuous habits of life, abilities, intel-
 “lectual accomplishments, and names
 “which command an hereditary reve-
 “rence. The vulgar idea, that because
 “a man is ready at figures, and pos-
 “sesses a turn for business, and has
 “been initiated in it, he therefore will
 “make the most wise and useful legisla-
 “tor,

“tor, ought to be scorned. A few
“men conversant in the lower details
“of business, in the House, may be
“requisite; but to make laws requires
“a more lofty, a more comprehensive
“understanding. If it was not so, an
“attorney would make a better judge
“than a chancellor.—[You may smile :
“I know the allusions in your mind ;
“but the facts upon which you found
“them have, I believe, generally been
“misunderstood by the world. I have
“reason to think, *Lord Chancellor*
“*Hardwicke was always intended for*
“*the bar.*”]

“You seemed to laugh at the useless
“occupations of our neighbour here,
“Sir Thomas Bulmer, who has taken
“your

“ your insinuations good-naturedly, as
“ became him. I scarce know any or-
“ der of men more useful and respecta-
“ ble than country-gentlemen living
“ upon their estates, spending their
“ money upon the spot, whence it has
“ arisen, and attending, by example,
“ advice, and assistance, to an indus-
“ trious peasantry. Is such a man to
“ be without those innocent amuse-
“ ments, which conduce both to his
“ health and his spirits? I am sure he
“ does much more wisely in thus spend-
“ ing his evenings, and his mornings,
“ than by daily engagements to some
“ neighbouring dinner, and a late re-
“ turn at night, which breaks in upon
“ the finest hours of the succeeding
“ morning; expending more money in
“ a less

“ a less satisfactory, and certainly less
“ wholesome, manner. We are not all
“ expected to have the same turns and
“ propensities. It is not necessary that
“ every man should waste his time in
“ studies, for which, perhaps from in-
“ clination, or numerous other causes,
“ he is ill-adapted. A country-gentle-
“ man, who spends much of his time
“ in fox-hunting, if he attends to his
“ other duties, I respect and admire.—
“ If indeed, as sometimes is the case, he
“ ventures out of his sphere, and judges
“ only of other people by his own
“ standard ; if, because he neglects
“ books, he deems every man a pedant
“ who employs his time in reading, and
“ despises those who are not always wil-
“ ling to bear the fatigue, or the loss of
“ as

“ as many hours in the field, as him-
“ self ; if he presumes to think that no
“ man ought to give an opinion different
“ from his own, in the transaction of
“ county affairs, whose rental is smaller
“ than his ; or, if he ventures to appre-
“ ciate birth and respect solely accord-
“ ing to his own narrow experience and
“ information ; he becomes indeed a
“ very contemptible kind of animal,
“ and deserves the lash of better minds.
“ But so it is of all in every sphere who
“ go beyond their station.

“ Sir Thomas Bulmer will excuse me,
“ when I say that *I* would not be quite
“ confined to pass my days with his
“ hunt of Gangham-lane club ; but
“ while they leave those, whose habits
“ of

“ of life are not quite congenial with
“ their own, to themselves, I should
“ never wish to condemn them. As
“ Mr. Baugham has been rather free in
“ his strictures, I must say I prefer
“ them by far to the *Bengal-Club* with
“ all their riches, and all their impor-
“ tance. In a free country, it is, it
“ ought to be, open to every one
“ to obtain wealth by his industry,
“ his ingenuity, or his spirit! But
“ I think the prosperous man might
“ be content, without forcing his swollen
“ purse into one's face, by way of
“ blinding one, and then kicking up
“ one's heels. A man who has chosen
“ to pursue a more self-denying, intel-
“ lectual habit of life, might surely be
“ left

“ left to his own ideas in homely fruga-
 “ lity without being insulted.

“ The rapid facility with which riches
 “ have been acquired in the last twenty
 “ years, not only in the East-Indies,
 “ the West-Indies, and the factories,
 “ but at home, by contracts, loans,
 “ speculations, fees of office, &c. &c.
 “ have advanced so very great a number
 “ of very mean people into excessive
 “ splendour, that, instead of yielding
 “ more than formerly to its predomi-
 “ nance, every mode of giving power
 “ and respect to the antient families
 “ ought to be adopted. The tide is
 “ flowing, and the waves are every day
 “ growing higher, to overwhelm us ;
 “ but my feeble voice, till it is quite
 “ drowned,

“drowned, shall never cease to cry out
“against it. It is not for myself I care :
“I can bear their malice, and their
“scorn, which, in the small extent to
“which I am known, has never ceased
“to persecute me. Without ability,
“without knowledge, they yet have
“never wanted an invention by which
“they have endeavoured to make me
“ridiculous. But I am confident that
“I have truth on my side ; and truth
“will at last win its way to be heard.
“I do not mean that they are incapable
“of raising the laugh against me : I
“know too well the contrary ; and it
“would be foolish to deny that I have
“often felt it ; but the feeling has been
“momentary : my conviction has ne-
“ver altered ; nor have I ever been
“dispirited

“dispirited from declaring my abhor-
“rence of *purse-proud wealth*.”

Sir James Pickman by no means enjoyed this. He writhed about, and kept his temper with some difficulty. After half-confidering, he thought, at two or three different periods, Fitz-Albini had given him some advantage. Two or three half-formed words died upon his tongue. At last a pause gave him the opportunity, and the courage. “Mr. “Fitz-Albini,” said he, “the active
“life I have led has not given me the
“same taste which you have had for
“abstract speculations; and for studying
“Homer, and Virgil, and Cicero, and
“all the great writers of antiquity: you
“will forgive me, if I express my fear
“that

“ that you have rather heated your brain
 “ too much with these same authors :
 “ they may be very fine (I won’t say any
 “ thing to their disparagement), for
 “ your colleges, and your lofty authors,
 “ who live in garrets upon the feasts of
 “ their own brains, and *such-like* : but
 “ they won’t bear upon life, Mr. Fitz-
 “ Albini, they won’t bear upon life.
 “ Perhaps too I might a little foil you
 “ at your own weapons : I have not
 “ quite forgot my Latin *no more* than
 “ you : there is an author we used to
 “ read (*Ovidius Naso* I believe was his
 “ name), who says,”—[and then he be-
 gan to collect his mouth; and in a
 broad Scotch accent, and a wrong
 quantity to almost every syllable, he
 pronounced the following trite passage :]

“ — Quæ

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“ — Quæ

“ ————— Quæ non fecimus ipsi,

“ Vix ea nostra voco. ————— ”

“ Now, Mr. Fitz-Albini, I think that
 “ is sheer good sense ; produce me a
 “ few more such passages, and I’ll have
 “ at your fine poets and orators myself.
 “ I think rank a very good thing ; and
 “ I think a good old estate a very good
 “ thing. But then I don’t think it is a
 “ bad thing for a man, by his own in-
 “ dustry or abilities, to make his own
 “ fortune—eh ?”

“ No more do I, Sir James,” replied
 Fitz-Albini, “ if he makes it honestly ;
 “ and will not be so puffed up with his
 “ own success as to despise every body
 “ else, and will not think himself ill-
 “ used, if all the honours and privi-
 “ leges

leges of the land are not his rewards,
“ in preference to smaller, though
“ competent, fortunes, which being in-
“ herited from a long line of ancestors,
“ have given the possessors time and
“ opportunity to cultivate more refined,
“ more dignified, though perhaps not
“ so showy, qualities: I agree with
“ Ovid, that the acts of our ancestors
“ cannot be substituted for our own de-
“ ficiencies in obtaining new rewards:
“ but I assert, that the acts of a man’s
“ ancestors may place him in such a si-
“ tuation, as gives an opportunity to
“ himself to pursue a line of conduct
“ which he could not have pursued
“ without such birth, and which merits
“ a species of honours, that the fabrica-
“ tor of his own fortune can scarcely
“ ever

“ ever be entitled to. Numbers may
“ and will, abuse the advantages of birth
“ as they do every other advantage :
“ But it should, and often does, ope-
“ rate as an incentive to new glory.

“ There are modes of becoming rich,
“ which the general sense of mankind
“ has condemned, such as extortion,
“ famine, the sword, fraud, and many
“ others. Of such I am not now speak-
“ ing. But in the gradual acquisition
“ of wealth by legal, sanctioned, means,
“ I fear there is most frequently a disho-
“ nest, and almost always a narrow, self-
“ ish, sordid, spirit. Mr. Baugham spoke
“ of the liberality, sense, knowledge,
“ of the British merchant. I must
“ think Mr. Baugham suffered himself
“ to

“ to fall into a very trite, and unfound-
 “ ed, though fashionable, sort of cant.
 “ It has been my lot to know, and to
 “ watch, some of this description. ~~In~~
 “ the first place, where is their libera-
 “ lity? They put their names down
 “ indeed for pompous sums to public
 “ or private subscriptions advertised in
 “ news-papers, when country gentle-
 “ men, of larger landed rentals, come
 “ forward slowly, or not at all. But
 “ recollect the nature of their circum-
 “ stances: immense sums are always
 “ passing through their hands; every
 “ thing is comparative; a few guineas
 “ appear like a cipher to them, who are
 “ making 20, or perhaps 30, or 40, or
 “ even 100, *per cent.* by hazarding the
 “ capitals of other people: the country
 VOL. I. N gentleman,

“ gentleman, meanwhile, is waiting for
“ the slow payment of scarcely two *per*
“ *cent.* on his own capital, on which he
“ cannot encroach, because it is locked
“ up in land; an income, which his
“ necessary habits of hospitality, his
“ support of the poor, his land-tax, and
“ his repairs, have already fully antici-
“ pated. But this man, who would
“ thus liberally bring forth his guineas
“ to the distressed, would, if such dis-
“ tress impelled a person to part with
“ his property, of which the *advanta-*
“ *geous* sale was to determine whether
“ the wretched being should have any
“ surplus for his own subsistence; this
“ liberal man, I say, would not scruple
“ to cheat the vendor out of a thousand
“ pounds, perhaps the only remnant he
“ could

“ could have hoped to consider as his
 “ own. Call him to account: he smiles:—
 “ ‘ oh, there he was at his trade; it was
 “ *a bargain!*’—Where is his knowledge?
 “ In commerce? No: he has contem-
 “ plated but some one branch, of which
 “ the means of prosperity or decay have
 “ warped all his ideas. If he be a West-
 “ India merchant, every thing is to be
 “ sacrificed to its produce, and con-
 “ sumptions. If we cannot retain islands
 “ enough to fill our markets here, the
 “ whole force and finances of the na-
 “ tion must be exhausted to obtain
 “ them; and the minister is a fool, and
 “ the country lost, if they are sacrificed.
 “ If we push our conquests, so as to
 “ overstock the markets, though our
 “ country should be enriched, and our

“ glory extended, it is nothing but op-
“ probrium and ruin. If he be a corn-
“ factor, are his opinions to be trusted
“ regarding the agriculture of the
“ country ?—The very reverse.—His
“ whole thoughts, and all his manoeu-
“ vres, are fixed upon keeping down
“ the price of the produce of our own
“ country, that he may obtain the
“ bounty, and the gain, of importing
“ it from other kingdoms, to the ruin
“ of the farmers, and the draining the
“ nation of so much positive wealth.
“ Merchants do therefore, (they always
“ must), contemplate commerce in a
“ narrow partial light, without the in-
“ clination, or perhaps the capacity, of
“ viewing it on the broad basis of its
“ political relations. Where do their
“ great

“ great abilities appear? They are ready, perhaps, at figures; and, by an active bustling life, and an intercourse with a great variety of people, there are a few common topics at which they must be ready, more ready, I admit, than the generality of country-gentlemen, whose understandings, if not by nature particularly vigorous, the quiet, retired life they lead has a tendency to render sluggish and dull. But dull and sluggish as they too often are (and I cannot deny that I frequently have found them a little soporifick), when roused, they are at least infinitely more generous, bold, and comprehensive, than the pert, calculating, balancing, ideas of a mercantile head.

“ All this will be deemed illiberal.
“ This bugbear name of illiberality has
“ frightened us till we are to confound
“ all distinctions. The consequence is,
“ that we are to surrender our under-
“ standings, hood-winked, to these peo-
“ ple as our masters. Literature, ge-
“ nius, elevated sentiments, liberal pro-
“ fessions, are to be silent, and shrink
“ into insignificance, before trade and
“ wealth. Wealth is now the sole god
“ of our idolatry; and trade is held in
“ the highest reverence, because it
“ brings us nearest to that selfish, in-
“ solent, immoral, corrupt, sensual,
“ blood-stained, altar. Let but a fel-
“ low, who once wore a livery, come
“ back from the East with his big purse
“ pouring over with gold, even though
“ the

“ the stains of the blood through which
 “ he waded to it are visible to every eye,
 “ and the shrieks of dying thousands
 “ are yet ringing in every ear;—let him
 “ throw open his splendid apartments in,
 “ Grosvenor-square, or Portland-place,
 “ and half the titles and rank in the
 “ kingdom will be seen flocking to his
 “ assemblies.—Express your wonder—
 “ people stare with contempt in your
 “ face, as much as to say, ‘ where have
 “ you lived? what foolish prejudices
 “ have you got into your head? The
 “ days of chivalry are over, Mr. Don
 “ Quixote !”

“ The days of chivalry are over!
 “ But some of the sentiments of chi-
 “ valry shall not be over with me; be-

“ cause I believe them to be founded
“ in virtue and consummate wisdom !”

Here Mr. Baugham, whose face had exhibited a thousand contortions during this harangue, began, in a ridiculous mimicking tone, to repeat that sublime passage of Mr. Burke, which I have so often heard East-Indians select for their laughter : “ *It is now sixteen or seventeen*
“ *years since I saw the Queen of France,*
“ *then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and*
“ *surely never lighted on this orb, which*
“ *she hardly seemed to touch, a more de-*
“ *lightful vision. I saw her just above*
“ *the horizon, decorating and cheering the*
“ *elevated sphere she just began to move*
“ *in—glittering like the morning star, full*
“ *of life, and splendour, and joy. Ob!*
“ *what*

“ *what a revolution! and what an heart*
 “ *must I have, to contemplate without emo-*
 “ *tion that elevation, and that fall! Lit-*
 “ *tle did I dream, when she added titles of*
 “ *veneration to those of enthusiastic, dis-*
 “ *tant, respectful love, that she should*
 “ *ever be obliged to carry the sharp anti-*
 “ *dote against disgrace concealed in that*
 “ *bosom; little did I dream that I should*
 “ *have lived to see such disasters fallen*
 “ *upon her in a nation of gallant men, in*
 “ *a nation of men of honour, and of cava-*
 “ *liers: I thought ten thousand swords*
 “ *must have leaped from their scabbards to*
 “ *avenge a look that threatened her with*
 “ *insult.—But the age of chivalry is gone.*
 “ *—That of sophisters, œconomists, and*
 “ *calculators, has succeeded; and the*
 “ *glory of Europe is extinguished for ever.*

N 5 “ *Never,*

“ Never, never more, shall we behold that
“ generous loyalty to rank and sex, that
“ proud submission, that dignified obedience,
“ that subordination of the heart, which
“ kept alive, even in servitude itself, the
“ spirit of an exalted freedom. The un-
“ bought grace of life, the cheap defence of
“ nations, the nurse of manly sentiment
“ and heroic enterprize, is gone! It is
“ gone, that sensibility of principle, that
“ chastity of honour, which felt a stain like
“ a wound, which inspired courage, while
“ it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled
“ whatever it touched, and under which
“ vice itself also lost half its evil, by losing
“ all its grossness *.” There is a passage

* Burke’s “ Reflections on the Revolution in
“ France,” pp. 112, 113.

“ for

“for you, Mr. Fitz-Albini, it out-
“heroes all your heroics.”

“Mr. Baugham,” answered Fitz-
Albini, in a firm, collected, voice,
“though I will not pretend to compli-
“ment either the tone or accent in
“which you have spoken, yet I shall
“not hesitate to declare, that the pas-
“sage, on which persons of your cast
“of mind have endeavoured to throw
“so much ridicule, is one of the most
“beautiful of a work which, not only
“in eloquence, but in wisdom, stands
“perhaps as high as mere human abili-
“ties have ever produced.”

The bold manner in which this was
spoken not only defeated the malignant

triumph of Mr. Baugham, but instantly re-composed the countenances of the company, who had been about to burst into a general fit of laughter. "M"

"I dare say, it may be very fine," said Sir Thomas Bulmer; "but, to say truth, I don't understand it."—"Why, to be free spoken," added Sir James Pickman, "I must agree with my friend Sir Thomas."—"Pshaw! pshaw! the man is mad," rejoined Mr. Baugham; "and there's an end on't!"

"You have indeed made an end of it," said Fitz-Albini sarcastically, disdaining to continue the subject.

Baugham,

Baugham, a little elated at the advantage he supposed himself to have attained, and yet irritated by the scornful countenance of Fitz-Albini at the close of this dispute, was determined to find some fresh subject of debate, and sat watchful and ready to dart forth upon the slightest opportunity.

A county member was mentioned who had lately been elected for ****shire without opposition, rather in consequence of the intimidation which the strength of his purse held out than of any natural and wide-established interest which he possessed.

“I cannot think,” said Sir Thomas Bulmer, “how that man ever thought
“ of

“ of such a situation. We remember
“ his father a contractor for clothing
“ the army but a few years ago. As to
“ his grandfather, nobody can find out
“ that he ever had one.”

“ As for that matter,” cried Sir James
Pickman, “ his money gives him as
“ good a right to enjoy his ambition as
“ other people. A bargain is a bar-
“ gain; and, if his father turned a penny
“ by supplying Government with goods,
“ why, so he ought: every man has a
“ right to be paid for his industry.”

“ Reasonably,” added Fitz-Albini.

“ I think so too,” replied Sir Tho-
mas; “ but some how or other, perhaps,
“ I can’t

“ I can’t tell why, I don’t feel quite satisfied, that the profits of that payment should purchase for his son a seat in parliament for a large and respectable county before the smell of the shop is a little farther removed.”

“ All that is rather old-fashioned stuff, Sir Thomas,” said Mr. Grinstead, the young clergyman, whose father, a banker, had bought for him a rich adjoining rectory, which enabled the spruce crop to keep as good hunters, and employ as much time in hunting and drinking, as any of the surrounding squires. “ Besides,” he added, “ who was there to contend with him? I know that county pretty well, and I have dined tolerably often at his house.—Why, there

“ there is not a gentleman ; no, nor a
“ nobleman, in the whole county, that
“ pretends to keep as good a table, or
“ as many servants, and horses, as he !
“ For every guinea that another shall
“ spend, I warrant ye, he shall spend
“ two !”

“ What is become of all the families
“ that represented the county formerly ?”
said Mr. Stydolfe.

“ Oh, as for that,” replied Mr. Grin-
sted, in a pert jesting tone, “ how
“ should I know ? Do you think I
“ ever enquire what happened in the
“ days of my grannam ? I think
“ though, when I used to be in that
“ neighbourhood, we dined sometimes
“ with

“ with two or three queer, plain, old
“ fashioned families, of queer-founding,
“ French-like names, who they said
“ were often elected formerly. But, Lord!
“ they were no more to be compared
“ with Sir Paul Grubskins, the present
“ member, in point of living, than my
“ servant is with me. I remember
“ being bored once or twice, when some
“ pedantic fellow, whom they called an
“ antiquarian, met us at dinner there,
“ with being dragged to see a horrid
“ dull room, hung with tapestry, and
“ an old shabby red velvet bed, with
“ nasty tarnished lace, where they said,
“ old Queen Bess slept in one of her
“ Progresses; for, here they told us the
“ squire's I don't know how-many-
“ times-great grandfather entertained
“ the

“ the old girl for near a week.—But
“ what cared I for the old harridan ;
“ or old Squire—(*Montfichet*, I think
“ they called him—a name I never heard
“ before)—Squire Montfichet’s ances-
“ tors ? All I can say is, that they
“ have not taught the Squire how to
“ give a good cheerful dinner ; for, a
“ plainer dinner, and a plainer, more
“ formal set of servants, I should never
“ wish to sit down before !”

“ Yet I am told,” replied Sir Thomas
Bulmer, “ that the name of Montfichet,
“ though you are not acquainted with
“ it, would, had it been set up on that
“ occasion, have drawn a very wide and
“ deeply-rooted interest to it, which
“ would

“ would soon have driven Sir Paul
 “ Grubskins out of the field.”

“ The mushroom families are cer-
 “ tainly getting too forward,” added
 Stydölfe ; “ but the old yeomanry of a
 “ county submit, I believe, reluctantly
 “ to the support of them.”

“ Pshaw! pshaw!” cried Mr. Baugham
 vehemently, having hitherto sat biting
 his lips, “ I thought we had had enough
 “ of this cant already.—Let us hear no
 “ more of such prejudiced stuff—old fa-
 “ milies, indeed, in this country!—Its
 “ all a *fudge*! The lies of those gentry
 “ by Doctors Commons, who wear a
 “ fool’s coat bedaubed with lions and
 “ flower-de luces on procession-days,
 “ and

“ and would sell the hangman a coat of
“ arms for half a crown, will not go
“ down in these days.—Why, you laugh
“ now—and Fitz-Albini thinks I know
“ nothing about the matter—but these
“ things are true—literally true—Fitz-
“ Albini cannot deny them—he must
“ remember how old Garter granted a
“ coat (and a royal one too) to the *Jack-*
“ *Ketch* of the day.—Old Writhefley,
“ and Dethick, and Byfhe, and twenty
“ more of them—I should wish to know
“ what credit is to be given to any of
“ their pedigrees, by those who know
“ their characters! Yet these are the
“ authentic documents on which the
“ lazy race of what are called antient
“ gentry are to build their claims of
“ pre-eminence over men more de-
“ serving

“ serving than themselves. I say it is
“ all a juggle, a mixture of shameful
“ knavery and disgusting nonsense.—To
“ own the truth, I used to hear so much
“ on the subject, and to see those who
“ had been prosperous in the world
“ treated with such improper *hauteur*,
“ that it excited my enquiry, and I
“ have, since my return to England,
“ paid some attention to it. It was with
“ pleasure, therefore, that I embraced
“ the opportunity to accompany a foolish
“ acquaintance to the proper office to
“ enroll his arms. I deny the stories
“ that are generally propagated regard-
“ ing the birth of us East-Indians. But
“ this man had literally worn a livery.
“ His name was not a bad-sounding
“ one; and, as soon as he came to
“ England,

“ England, the coach-maker easily
“ found an old coat for his carriage. Of
“ this coat he demanded at the office
“ what is called a confirmation.—The
“ gentry there looked big, and blank,
“ and inquisitive, by turns, and then
“ began to ask several impertinent ques-
“ tions; and he was desired to leave the
“ matter for the consideration of another
“ day.—We went away—and in the
“ mean time a friend gave us a hint
“ that the fees for a *confirmation* are in
“ no degree of proportion to those for
“ a *new grant*; and that if my acquaint-
“ ance demanded the coat as a new
“ grant, he would have no more trouble
“ than that of paying the gratuity, and
“ obtaining the same coat, or so nearly
“ the same coat, that the difference
“ would

“ would not be perceptible, and there
 “ would be little difficulty in getting it
 “ called a *confirmation* (which is an ad-
 “ mission of an antient right) into the
 “ bargain. Thus instructed, we sallied
 “ forth a second time, and managed the
 “ matter admirably. We got the con-
 “ firmation, with no other difference
 “ than an imperceptible spot of Ermine
 “ on a charge of the shield, which
 “ nobody will ever see if painted there,
 “ though it will probably be soon left
 “ out; but which will save the he-
 “ rald’s credit, if ever the matter be
 “ called in question.—Now I appeal to
 “ Fitz-Albini’s candour to answer all
 “ this, if he can.—If he cannot, let
 “ our ears no more be stunned with such
 “ a farrago of base and empty fiction!

“ one of the vilest and lowest imposi-
“ tions that ever was practised on the
“ *rights of human nature !*

“ I know not why,” cried Fitz-Albini,
“ Mr. Baugham has taken so wide a
“ flight from the subject of conversa-
“ tion ; and still less can I conceive why
“ he has called on *me* to defend the
“ abuses of a certain office, which, if
“ they exist, are, in my opinion, de-
“ serving of all the terms of reproach
“ which he has applied to them. I am
“ sure none of my principles are, as he
“ seems to think, dependent on the ho-
“ nesty or skill of this office ; of whose
“ members, and their proceedings, I
“ am utterly ignorant, except what I
“ have gathered from Anstis’s ‘ History
“ of

“ of the Order of the Garter,’ a book
“ of credit, to which I suppose Mr.
“ Baugham alludes, and where indeed
“ there are several well-authenticated sto-
“ ries which give too much colour to his
“ complaints. But how this is to shake
“ the credit due to birth; how it is to
“ work the downfall of well-authenti-
“ cated genealogies of illustrious fami-
“ lies; I am utterly at a loss to guess.
“ Mr. Baugham mistakes: it is not
“ from this office, it is not from the
“ subscription of the names of all the
“ Garters, and the Clarencieux, and
“ Norroys, that a pedigree derives the
“ evidence of its truth. All property,
“ all inheritable rights, would indeed
“ be in a pitiable situation, were they
“ dependent on the judgement of any

“ narrow office, whose minds were not
“ rendered at once acute and enlarged
“ by the study and the practice of the
“ general laws of evidence, and whose
“ education and rank in life did not place
“ them above all suspicion of sinister
“ prejudices. I am not about to enter
“ into a dissertation upon Heraldry:
“ but Mr. Baugham surely need not be
“ told, that the use of arms became he-
“ reditary at least three centuries before
“ the establishment of the office in
“ question; that at those periods, when
“ they could not be bought and sold,
“ to obtain arms was an indisputable
“ honour; and to usurp them, when
“ they were openly exhibited on a
“ shield, and other parts of the armour,
“ was scarcely possible, from the nature
“ of

“ of the military subordination of those
 “ days. Nor is it unfrequent that they
 “ have left an unequivocal record be-
 “ hind them: they still, in many in-
 “ stances, exist sculptured upon tombs,
 “ or impressed upon seals appendant to
 “ deeds, which were executed at the
 “ time. This is what no herald can
 “ give or take away.—Grants of arms
 “ from the office are in their nature too
 “ contemptible for any well-founded
 “ distinction; and *confirmations*, there-
 “ fore, which are a derivative from
 “ them, must of course be so. Were
 “ the practice of the office, therefore,
 “ as base as Mr. Baugham represents it
 “ to be (which I hope it is not; at least
 “ I think they must possess some useful
 “ materials and hints of inquiry, if used

“ with caution) ; but were it so, yet I
“ totally deny his conclusions. How-
“ ever the boast of descent may be au-
“ thenticated in other countries, I am
“ sure there are a very considerable
“ number of families in this kingdom,
“ who can prove a most honourable se-
“ ries of progenitors, for at least six
“ centuries, by the most satisfactory and
“ demonstrable evidence.”

“ I cannot think,” replied Mr.
Baugham, “ how you can suffer your
“ strong and discriminating judgement
“ to be so led astray by the warmth of
“ your imagination. You must excuse
“ me, for we have been free with each
“ other this evening ; but really you
“ seem mad upon the subject. My
“ good

“ good fir, if you lay afide the heralds’
 “ pedigrees (which are indeed often
 “ without dates, proofs, or any thing
 “ but a bare ftring of names), yet look
 “ into the Peerages, and Baronetages,
 “ and candidly own if your critical eye
 “ has not difcovered innumerable mean
 “ and difguffing falfehoods, which muft
 “ fhake one’s confidence in all thofe
 “ high-founding claims of importance,
 “ of which we hear fo much.”

“ You forget,” answered Fitz-Albini,
 “ that thefe are mere panegyric books,
 “ on which no perfon of judgement
 “ ever thinks of relying. I admit
 “ birth is not enough regarded in ele-
 “ vations to honours in this country :
 “ and I am convinced the difregard is

“productive of very alarming evils.
“But is it right or wise to be always
“arguing against institutions from the
“abuse of them? Is it fair, because
“there are many lying pedigrees, and
“because many vain persons make unfounded
“pretensions to distinction, to
“argue there is no truth in any claims
“to honourable or noble descent? But
“admit, for a moment, that the greater
“part of those, who lay claim to a remote
“antiquity of honours, have
“no sufficient ground for them; yet,
“compared with new men, who were
“themselves born among the lower
“ranks, they have all the requisites
“which, in the strictest period of the
“feudal institutions, were deemed necessary.
“The definition of a gentleman

“ man by descent was, a person, whose
“ grandfather, by the father’s side, had
“ a right to bear arms. I presume that
“ Mr. Baugham will concede to me,
“ that the number of persons of this
“ description is very great in this coun-
“ try ; and that, as the usage at least is
“ generally a matter almost within me-
“ mory, the admission rests on no ab-
“ struse enquiries. I feel a little ashamed
“ of these minute discussions, as if I
“ considered of importance a subject,
“ of which the puerile abuses have
“ thrown upon it so proper a ridicule.
“ But Mr. Baugham has, in some de-
“ gree, compelled me into them, by
“ involving with them, with a good
“ deal of subtlety, the downfall of a
“ great and wise principle, which, in
“ such

“ such a government as ours, ought
“ never to be shaken. Where subordi-
“ nation of ranks is necessary (and I
“ should wish to know, indeed, in what
“ possible form of government it is not
“ necessary), *Birth*, as I have said be-
“ fore, and as Gibbon testifies, is *the*
“ *plainest and least invidious of all dis-*
“ *tinctions.*—Let me again, in my turn,
“ appeal to the candour of Mr.
“ Baugham ! Let me ask, if the power
“ to spend money, to purchase rotten
“ boroughs, and to fill up the loans of a
“ minister, is a reason for giving men an
“ hereditary place above well-educated,
“ virtuous, and independent, families, of
“ deep root, wide alliances, antient pro-
“ perty, and a kind of prescriptive influ-
“ ence, over the minds of their inferiors,
“ which

“ which is felt without irritation, and
 “ acknowledged without a struggle !
 “ Riches are fugitive ; birth is insepa-
 “ rable from the person ; new-got
 “ wealth is active and intriguing ; an-
 “ tient property is sluggish, though,
 “ upon great occasions, of much reli-
 “ ance and mighty power. If the bar-
 “ rier of birth is thrown down, a rest-
 “ less and wicked ambition will never
 “ cease to disturb the quiet of society.

“ I must now notice a mode of argu-
 “ ment which Mr. Baugham and his
 “ friends have taken, in my opinion a
 “ little extraordinary. They first deny
 “ that any respect or privileges ought
 “ to be allowed to birth, upon the old
 “ ground of the folly of rewarding a
 “ man.

“ man for the merits of his ancestors.
“ When reasons are alleged which
“ operate very strongly, at least upon
“ my mind, why a preference should,
“ in many cases, be paid to birth,
“ they shift their ground, and deny the
“ existence in this country of well-as-
“ certained pedigrees. If they rely on
“ this, they bring the matter to a very
“ short question, and most assuredly
“ choose to rely on an opinion, which
“ may be disproved, as I have said, by
“ the most demonstrable evidence. When
“ Mr. Baugham endeavoured to impli-
“ cate this question with the conduct and
“ character of a certain office, I thought
“ it right to separate them in my reply,
“ more particularly, as I have before
“ mentioned, that I could speak nothing
“ from

“ from my own experience; and, whe-
“ ther true or not, it had nothing to do
“ with the main question. But I must
“ take this opportunity of saying, that,
“ however some individuals may have
“ disgraced this profession (as some will
“ do every profession), yet surely no-
“ thing is more illiberal than to involve
“ the whole body in such stigmas. Nor
“ can I possibly allow any unfavourable
“ ideas of the members in general,
“ when I recollect the names of Glover,
“ Camden, Dugdale, Ashmole, King,
“ and Anstis, men who were an honour
“ to the literature of their country. And
“ when I read the works of a living
“ member of the college, who has ad-
“ ded some curious, acute, and critical,
“ *Illustrations of British History and Bio-*
“ *graphy*

“ *graphy* to the national stores, I have
“ no doubt, that, if some may be
“ found unworthy, there are others,
“ whose liberality, integrity, and know-
“ ledge, deserve all our confidence and
“ praise. The biographical accounts,
“ which accompany those beautiful en-
“ gravings by *Bartolozzi* from the Hol-
“ bein heads, the most beautiful por-
“ traits which I think were ever produ-
“ ced by the graver, and which proba-
“ bly Mr. Baugham, who collects ex-
“ pensive engravings, has bought, are
“ peculiarly ingenious and excellent ;
“ and they are understood to be writ-
“ ten by a member of that office, upon
“ which he would throw so much con-
“ tempt.”

He

He had scarce ended this long dispute, when a summons to the drawing-room came opportunely to prevent any farther warm language between him and Mr. Baugham, who appeared rather silenced than satisfied. Yet the boldness with which he had discussed topics, from which they who wish them well are too apt, through fear of ridicule, to shrink, had made a general impression, and particularly on all those who had any pretensions to education and family.

The conversation and the wine had given an unusual animation to the looks of Fitz-Albini. He entered the drawing-room with an happy confidence which was not lost upon the ladies. After wandering about the room for a little

time, while the solicitous looks of Miss Pickman in vain endeavoured to fix him near herself, he at length took a chair by Miss St. Leger, and entered into a conversation so different from his usual embarrassment, that, though she at first felt distressed, it was impossible for her long to continue her reserve.

Her countenance, that soon betrayed the delight which (though she endeavoured to suppress it) animated her whole frame, was too apparent to the anxious eyes of Miss Pickman, who sat overwhelmed by the most tormenting vexation and jealousy. Yet far, indeed, was it from her wish to inflict such pain; nor had she the smallest taint of that malignant triumph which is too common to

female minds. But such was the pleasure of Fitz-Albini's conversation, which, as soon as her attention appeared fixed, gradually opened, and became peculiarly ingenious, interesting, and energetic, that she at times forgot not only her rival, but the presence of any others of the company. The story of the park-keeper's daughter now vanished from her memory, as it had already done from that of the rest. And she indulged herself in listening and replying to him without controul.

He told her many of his sorrows and disappointments; he expatiated tenderly upon his father's illness; and discovered a pliability and softness of temper, which, from the high and haughty tone of his

countenance and language, she had never suspected.

While he thus possessed the power to engage her attention, he beheld her person illumined by a very uncommon degree of beauty, and his eyes betrayed an expression of admiration which did not escape even the dull, though inquisitive, observance of Mrs. Bracey, who resolved, however, for some time, to conceal her own displeasure, that she might add to the poignant mortification of Miss Pickman, whose looks, as she perceived, were betraying all the agonies of a mind convulsed by the most cruel of all passions.

But,

But, for Mrs. Bracey long to command her own temper, whatever might be the gratification she proposed to herself, was impossible. She could now continue the exertion no longer; and she bustled about, at supper, in such a manner among the party, who were not aware what she had in view, that she contrived to seat Fitz-Albini between herself and Miss Pickman; while Miss St. Leger was thrust to the bottom of the same side, at the greatest possible distance from him.

Thus placed beyond the power of escape, Fitz-Albini, now in good humour with himself, and all the world, was gentle, but silent; while the gloomy

and pouting countenance of Miss Pickman, and the insolent and taunting expressions of Mrs. Bracey, were equally lost upon him. He sat so immersed in his own thoughts, that all the irritating addresses of the latter could neither recall his attentions, nor discompose his looks.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



